THE WHIRLWIND

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By

A. STONE

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Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee and declare thou unto me.—JOB: Chap. 40: vi, vii.

MILTON-ON-THE-HUDSON, N. Y.
THE A. STONE FOUNDATION
PUBLISHERS - - - 1923

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Printed in the U. S. A.

NOV 20 1923

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TO

JAMES SCOTT,

WHO ALSO LOOKS ON THE MOST DELIGHTFUL AND INSPIRING REACH OF THE HUDSON, AND WITH A BRUSH, MAKES BEAUTIFUL THINGS.

THE WHIRLWIND

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CHAPTER I

When "Red Oak" Tilden got off the L. & N. New York sleeper at Mobile, Alabama, like the true merchant sea hound he had become, he started at once for the docks and the barquentine *Durland* that he as Master had signed to take through the war zone to Spain with stave timber.

"Red Oak" had been the name given him in his first year at Annapolis by a fellow cadet, and its fitness had made it stick, for he, with his short thick body and bushy red beard, did mightily resemble a sturdy red oak of the forests, and it was still as "Red Oak" that his friends lovingly hailed him in the many parts of the globe to which his sailings took him.

"Why had this tight, sound, insurable bottom had six captains in two years?" he asked himself for the hundredth time as he came in sight of her in the first rays of the early November morning. Either Simmons, the managing owner and timber exporter, had not known, or he had lied outright.

Though barely daylight, a spare, swarthy, some-

what undersized man with a tousled head of hair black as any Indian's, was smoking a cigarette near the forecastle companionway. As he saw Captain Tilden coming he moved listlessly and leaned against the chained deckload of short timber which was everywhere except a small space in the waist.

Captain Tilden knew that the man was Bates, the Mate, before he got to the plank, and Bates knew the visitor to be the new Captain. As Tilden told the latter who he was, Bates' small bloodshot eyes glared a bit, a sneering smile coming to his thin lips, but he did not move; all of which was studied insolence, though Tilden did not think so at the time.

"Yes, the crew is all aboard now, but you'd better move out in the stream—half were drunk last night—they'll be up soon raising hell about breakfast. The cook sneaked his dunnage ashore and deserted; he wasn't any good but he was better'n none—can't get 'em at all now . . ." The Mate's voice trailed off sullenly.

"Take the crew ashore for breakfast," was the Captain's first definite command; then— "Is the cabin locked?" he asked, taking a decisive step in that direction.

"Yes." Bates drew long on his cigarette and while blowing the smoke, threw it overboard with

a free arm movement. He rose stiffly as though muscle-bound, and tumbled down into the crew's quarters, returning presently with a bunch of keys and holding them by the one required.

"Oh, Captain," he called after Tilden, as the latter took the keys and started towards the cabin. "You see I've been with the ship so long I've fixed up quarters forward and don't use the cabin."

The Captain hesitated as if about to question Bates, then resumed his way aft.

The cabin was planned much as a big five-room city flat. What would have been the kitchen in the latter was here a storeroom for all but the less bulky items in the provision list.

The Captain's room faced astern the full width of the cabin and the ship save for the stairway on the left from the poop deck above. Being unusually large, it answered for instruments, chart room, office, and sleeping. A single brass bed in an alcove made by the stairs was largely hidden by heavy portières.

Captain Tilden sat down at the flat top desk, his stocky log-like body completely filling the revolving chair.

This was far better than the New York hotel room or the cramped Pullman he had just left. A feeling of elation grew almost to exaltation until his glance took in the bed. The snowy covering

peeped coyly through the portières. That bed was made when brass was cheaper than now. It shone with recent polishing. It was ready for his use, and—he could sense—neither it nor the whole room had been put in order by a man. It was evident that the last Captain had had his wife with him. A pang went through his heart as he thought of his own recent loss, but quickly stifling it, he rose.

China, silver and linen caught his eye through the open sliding door of the dining-room. He crossed the hall to the Mate's room and bathroom just forward of it. Both were well fitted, unusually comfortable. Again he wondered why the Mate preferred to quarter forward with the crew.

"Perhaps they have been in the coast trade where the Mate is often nothing more than a working foreman," he thought.

While going about ventilating the cabin, again it came to him that the last Captain and wife had come aboard in good faith; everywhere her touch was evident. Why had they left the ship at the last moment? His mouth shut firmly. He returned to the desk to make a list of things to be done before sailing: insurance survey, examine spare gear, check provisions, sign the crew again; "get a cook," came last; he would attend to that when he went up town for breakfast.

"I will go now," he decided.

At the gangplank he met Bates.

"As soon as you breakfast the crew, Mr. Bates, set your watches, then shake out your cloth and all spares so I can inspect them—"

"The sails are all new and all right, Captain," the Mate interrupted with assurance.

"—and, Mr. Bates," the Captain went on, ignoring the impertinence, "I want the last provisioning bills to check up the storeroom."

Bates met the steady gaze of the Captain for a moment and flinched. He knew now that that powerful body and windmill arms were not to be excited needlessly. This was reflected in his:

"All right, Captain."

After breakfasting, the employment agencies, ship chandlers and pilots were appealed to for a man for the galley. Most of them shook their heads. Some smiled at the Captain's predicament. One agency offered to wire their connection in New Orleans and communicate with him later; there was a possibility they might get him a black or a Chinaman, but Army and Navy camps had stripped the country of every man who knew enough to boil water.

Captain Tilden started back to the barquentine rubbing his eyes solemnly. The inconvenience and cruelty of war!—normally sea cooks are available anywhere!

Back on the deck he saw Bates had every sail set as ordered.

"Bates may do when he learns I don't want suggestions," he reflected. Mates were harder to get than cooks—Mr. Simmons had told him so, and casual inquiry had confirmed it. But as he came alongside his brows drew together.

"The Mate knows better than to leave my dunnage on the wharf; what does he mean by such conduct?"

He called sharply to Bates:

"Mr. Bates, send my dunnage on board; then bring your spare cloth and all other spare gear up where I can see it."

"That has not been used for so long we will have to move cargo to get it," the mate grumbled.

"What is spare gear good for if not instantly available?" Tilden replied tartly. "And where are the provision bills I asked for?"

Bates started forward and soon came back with some dirty crumpled bills.

"The ship's articles, Mr. Bates—I don't find them; do you know where they are?"

"I guess I have them too. When the Captain quit, Mr. Simmons told him to turn them over to me."

"I see. Well, Mr. Bates, to save time, bring everything with you this trip."

Tilden grasped his big square chin as if to stroke an imaginary beard, as he watched the Mate move away. "Muddy black eyes, queer long nose with a hump midway, irritable and pessimistic—and his hands—talons, not fingers—queer sort," was his mental summing up of the Mate.

When the ship's articles and other records were produced, he said:

"Mr. Bates, when the gear is out, bring the whole crew aft; they must all sign again to sail with me. How do they rate?"

"Deep water mostly."

"I'll look them over when they sign—what if I want to weed out?"

Bates' thin lips tightened to a slit.

"They're very scarce—oh, I guess we could get some."

The Captain had the new articles ready when Bates reported all hands outside.

"Now the articles are just the same except my name as Master. You can sign first, Mr. Bates," and the Captain offered him a pen.

"Why—er—er— I have a contract with the owners. I—I—never sign with the crew. I've been with the ship so long—" Bates stammered, backing away slightly.

"That might be all right or at least not so important coasting, but for deep sea every one on

board must be bound to the Captain by the articles," the Captain tolerantly explained.

"As long as I have a contract I don't see any good in signing," Bates insisted doggedly, against the weight of the Captain's scrutiny.

"Then as I understand it, you refuse to sign?"

"I have always had a private contract, and—"

"Let it go now, and send in the crew," the Captain said with finality.

The crew all filed in and signed without hesitation.

"A pretty good lot—Sturgis, the carpenter, especially," Tilden commented to himself after deciding to make no change.

It was about eleven o'clock when he went to inspect and make a list of the spare gear. Happening to glance forward, he was surprised to see Mr. Simmons, the owner, talking with the Mate. Was it possible that Mr. Simmons did not know that this was grave discourtesy? Almost as old as the sea itself is the law that the owner must address his ship through the Master.

Mr. Simmons was still talking to Bates when Tilden returned to the cabin, thinking deeply. He recalled what Simmons had said in New York of Bates; too, the fact that the Mate had refused to sign and had given other evidence of insubordina-

tion. The latter's conduct, and the owner's discourtesy aroused Tilden's ire.

Perhaps this was why the *Durland* had had five Captains in two years. In any event "Red Oak" Tilden decided that he would soon find out.

CHAPTER II

Captain Tilden working at his desk felt all hesitation and doubts fade away. The feeling was not that of shackles removed—nothing so dramatic. Changes from within do not come with trumpet and drum, but in a way delightfully subtle. He realized he was back in his old form. His mental processes had spring and ginger; self-confidence was again enthroned. His three years ashore and the loss of his child—the one vital interest of his old life—instead of having been a destroying fire, had tempered and left him with clearer discernment and a smoother, keener cutting edge.

"Red Oak" did not care how long Simmons talked with Bates, or what Bates would tell him. He was ready and waiting when he heard:

"Good morning, Captain Tilden."

"Good morning, Mr. Simmons."

Captain Tilden rose and stood still, smiling but cold. When the owner of the ship came over to him, he intentionally gave him a limp handclasp.

"I see you got here, and I suppose you are quite satisfied by this time," Simmons remarked lamely, after feeling the flabby handshake.

Captain Tilden shook his head slowly, his lips tightening. He did not intend to mince matters.

"No, Mr. Simmons, not satisfied yet. You see my unpacked bags there?—" pointing to them. He met the gaze of the astonished owner squarely.

"Why—I am astonished! I thought as I told you that matters were in prime condition for sailing.—What is the trouble?"

"Mr. Simmons, are you astonished that I think your conditions impossible, or that I have discovered so quickly them to be so? I have just made a list for you to look over."

"If there are impossible conditions, you have discovered them mighty quickly." Mr. Simmons' eyes avoided Tilden's and sought instead the piece of paper handed him. "I thought myself fortunate in securing your services, but of course—" he halted, crossed his legs, and took out a cigarette.

"Mr. Simmons, your enterprise is so loosely thrown together that it seems impossible that a man as big as you does not see it. Certainly I—"

"I have other interests—and everything is now so upset; I may have been misled—I'd really like to know what you think." Mr. Simmons was plainly at a loss.

"Are you sure?" Tilden pointed to the slip of paper. "Time and money are called for;" he fairly

exploded—"you may get a Captain to take her as she is!"

"But I want to know—" Simmons insisted doggedly.

"Well, all right; I'll tell you; I'm in no way superstitious. Such rot as signs, fortune-telling, astrology and ungrammatical lurid sea language I dropped years ago along with corsets and naval academy snobbishness, but there's nothing about this ship from truck to keel that I will not know before I sail. Likewise about you as owner-manager. And I warn you that I will not sail until prudence has been fully satisfied. I am not afraid to sail a ship anywhere which to me is right, but I am too big a coward to commit suicide by sailing in one that's wrong.—

"Bates, the Mate you asked me to retain, has been and expects to be the real Master. You have been recognizing him as such and you so acknowledged him just now when you came aboard. Mr. Simmons, I don't believe I'm a foolish stickler for form except when discipline and morale are involved. The cabin first, however, and any report from a caretaker should be made in the presence of the Master."

Owner Simmons became grave under such an arraignment from one whom he had agreed to pay four hundred dollars a month and a fifty per cent.

bonus. The Captain waited doubtful of the reply he would receive, but at the moment seemingly indifferent. Simmons' eyes came back to the paper.

"In simple fairness I admit your complaint is just, but you may not have noticed that Bates stepped in front of me when I was coming directly to the cabin. He was somewhat justified by the fact that he was left in charge."

"I grant that, Mr. Simmons, but that does not explain why you have kept a man two years who has been stealing," persisted Tilden steadily.

Simmons dropped his chin between his thumb and index finger and raised his eyes but did not meet the Captain's glance.

"I think that can be arranged—"

"Only one way," interrupted Tilden, "and that is for Bates' bag and baggage to go over the side at once."

"If I undertake—"

"Nothing whatever," again Tilden broke in, "except for you to decide between us. If you want Bates, I take the next train to New York.— If you want me, I must discharge him in your presence."

"Can you get another Mate without delay?"

"No—at least it's doubtful."

Mr. Simmons looked out at the skylight, blew smoke that way, then turned a puzzled glance to-

wards the Captain. Though a shrewd timber trader, he was inclined to follow the course of least resistance.

"And the general nature of your other requirements?" the owner countered, grasping his chin again.

"Extra running gear, survey of both ship and cargo by underwriters; Bates likely had to do with the loading."

"Only a short time ago I paid for extra gear," Simmons answered, a savage glint beginning to appear in his eye.

"I believe that or I would not even stop to talk; but Bates has been attending to such things and I have proof that he's been stealing from the ship in other ways. If your proposition is a straight-out open-and-above-board matter of running blockade, delay or expense doesn't count. If your project is not of that nature, you won't want me and I will be Captain Number Six to leave your employ."

Simmons uncrossed and spread his legs resolutely, looked at the tip of his lighted cigarette—the third he had smoked while there—then cleared his throat.

"Captain Tilden," he began, "I'm going to take the chance. I'm going to bet on your being big enough to do it. Send for Bates and discharge

him; after he's off the ship we'll decide what's necessary."

Tilden's short legs reached the floor and took him to the door with what seemed to be a single movement.

Bates came slowly at his call, as if any time would do, but his satisfied smirk faded when he got into the ominous atmosphere of the cabin.

"Mr. Bates," began Tilden, scanning him, "I have decided we can't get on. Get your dunnage over the side as soon as possible."

"Why—er—what—?"

Then both Bates and Captain Tilden turned toward Mr. Simmons, whose face was now distinctly inscrutable.

"I have told you why, Mr. Bates," said the Captain.

Bates' neck reddened with anger and his eyes took on the appearance of glowing coals. He turned slightly to Simmons whose face was still as difficult to read as that of the Mona Lisa. Bates may have correctly interpreted the slightly nervous movement of the Captain's arm resting on his desk for he began to back out, with another glare at Simmons.

"All right, I'll go, but I've got some wages coming."

"Yes; go to the office and make it speedy; every-

thing waits until you're over the side." Captain Tilden followed him forward, catching sight of Sturgis, the carpenter.

"Sturgis, the Mate is leaving the ship—discharged. You will now have charge; keep an eye on him and report when he's over, and—Sturgis, inquire among the men if any of them ever cooked —just a mess or two until we get some one."

When he got back to the cabin, Simmons seemed relieved. They went together to the poop deck but instead of continuing the discussion of the affairs of the ship, their conversation turned into general channels.

Sturgis returned to say that Spanish John would stump the galley until the cook came.

As Bates started over the plank and up the wharf with his two big bundles of personal effects, Simmons exclaimed to the Captain:

"Captain Tilden, you have lived up to my expectations. For two years I have been trying to find a man with nerve enough to pry that fellow off this ship. Go ahead, rush what you consider necessary —expense is nothing if we get speed—despatch!"

Sail makers worked night and day. The Underwriters' survey pronounced the hull sound. The deck for a distance abaft the forecastle into the waist was ordered cleared and more chain lashings.

The surveying was done punctiliously by what seemed not a man, but rather a tremendously big nose, a cane, a slightly bent figure and a sole remaining unmanageable wisp of hair in front. This was Fortesque, an Englishman who seldom failed to introduce his speech without a hesitating "e," "er" or an "oh," apparently in an effort to be brief, exact and convincing. What he didn't nose out of a ship and cargo, he detected through his substantial cane by taps and punches. He adroitly drew from Captain Tilden what was being done about spare gear.

As Tilden suspected, he was more than an ordinary inspector. He adjusted all principal losses in both Americas, and had other important functions of which the Captain was to learn later.

When Fortesque was through the barquentine was known to be seaworthy and the cargo properly stowed and lashed.

"Oh—er—Captain Tilden, you know our records show you have lost no ship or had no major accident," the Inspector said. "In times like these, we looked closely at the Master's record before placing a half million on ship and cargo—it is simple prudence. We want you to get through but if you should get called in the zone, stand still and show them you're all timber cargo which has been paid for by a neutral."

It was Fortesque's suggestion that the ship be provisioned there in Mobile, so that nothing but fresh vegetables need be taken on in Spain.

Mr. Simmons was to get a cook, and Captain Tilden his mate.

In answer to Tilden's inquiry, Captain Blount, his friend, wired from New York:

"No mates immediately available."

This was not reassuring. They knew in the morning of the third day everything would be ready and aboard before night except a cook and mate.

Mr. Simmons on a slight prospect, rushed to New Orleans, returning later in the day exultant; he had secured a cook.

"No choice, Captain; convalescent, just discharged from the Navy and the hospital."

"Where is he?" asked Captain Tilden, coatless, glancing about from where they stood alongside the barquentine.

"Came on the train with me; will be here shortly.— There he is now—thin as a razor back, but that isn't against him."

They could see him coming, or rather they saw a uniform struggling with a goodly sized bag.

"Then as soon as we get a little more extra cloth and green stuff aboard, we can sail; I have signed a mate," said Captain Tilden, his eyes twinkling.

"A mate?" exclaimed Simmons excitedly, looking from the advancing uniform which contained the very shadow of a cook.

"Yes, a mate; I have signed Bates."

The manager-owner whistled.

"Yes, Bates. He came and applied for the job. He apologized for his insolence, stood the flog I put on him, and promised everything. But with all that I would not take him if any other were in sight. Something's wrong with him—a button or two gone; he acts like a man who has suffered mentally through disease. He doesn't know what to do with his hands; I only signed him for the outbound voyage," Tilden explained further; "I'm taking a chance only because of the urgency."

"Well, well—yes, time is money now in big figures. I hope you will be able to handle him." There was a strange note in Simmons' reply. Tilden thought of it afterwards; he was not sure whether it was hope, resignation, or warning.

Captain Tilden removed his hat, and thrust his fingers into his standing hair with a backward stroke—the only comb he ever used. He glanced sharply at the approaching cook, the last link in his sea-going chain; then scanning the owner's face, began:

"Mr. Simmons, a fairly disposed crew reflects the Master's innermost intentions towards it which it

senses astonishingly quick. They apparently get his number from the air. My intentions are good; I regard a crew as human beings whose welfare and existence now and hereafter are as important to them and their Maker as yours or mine. I invariably hold the crew. If Bates doesn't pay in kind, he'll soon learn of an iron hand."

Simmons nodded endorsement. Turning slightly he smiled easily, familiarly at the cook and pointed just beyond them to the gangplank of the *Durland*. Both men watched the lank body labor across the gangplank with his bag. It was not unusually large nor heavy, yet his spine bent double reversed as the letter "S" under its bulk. Their glances met.

"I did not notice whether there was any lead aboard or not; in my hurry I know I did not bring the burial ritual," was the Captain's condensed criticism, though spoken rather sadly.

"No, Captain; I think you're wrong; a fever often leaves them that way," mildly insisted Simmons, as they watched the cook disappear into the crew's quarters forward.

"Good God—I hope so!" responded Tilden fervently. "His face doesn't show it so much as his body. Above his shoulders, he is remarkable."

And so he was; one could believe that the hospital surgeon in order to save such a face, head and

neck, had artistically grafted them on the only available material on hand at the moment, which was a weak, slat-like body, prominent rumps, sinking flanks, and all bone legs, accentuated by the pants that laced about his hips and flapped about his shanks as though encasing steel rods instead of skin and bones, to which were added articulate smallish feet. The malady had left the cheek bones slightly prominent and the considerable red of his lips cracked and peeling. Distinctly dull now were the dark blue, well spaced eyes under arching brows, and the chiseled, slightly aquiline nose was almost too prominent.

"I will be as easy on him as possible so that he'll last this voyage," Captain Tilden said indulgently, breaking a moment's silence.

"He may surprise you, Captain—"

They were interrupted by a ship chandler's heavy motor truck rushing on the dock and bringing up short at the *Durland's* gangplank.

"Mr. Simmons, there is the last of my spare cloth and vegetables. I am all cleared and the tide is right; telephone for a tug and I'll see the sun set at sea to-night."

"One will be here to take your line by the time you get that stuff aboard," Simmons called back, as he hurried away.

It was a big load—barrels, crates, baskets and a

hamper of green vegetables; rolls of sail cloth and other odds and ends needed to complete the smallest detail of his equipment for a month's voyage in winter, the worst season of the year, in addition to having to pass through war waters.

Bates had every man jumping and they had it all on top of the deck load, though in great disorder, just before the tug blew for their tow line. Hawsers that had held the *Durland* to the wharf for many waiting days were slackened, and she began to drift slowly into the stream.

Mr. Simmons rushed alongside in time to shake hands with Captain Tilden.

"Good luck, Captain!" he said as the breach between the dock and the ship widened. "Jamb her to the last thread; remember, no complaint about bills that stand for speed—despatch—"

"I know—I understand—"

"Instructions about return cargo will be waiting for you when you get to Bilboa," continued Simmons, bending forward with hands on his knees.

"If we get there," smiled Tilden, making a megaphone of his hands.

"You're going to get there!" was the parting injunction as the owner started slowly up the wharf.

As predicted by Captain Tilden, at sunset every sail of the *Durland* was set; a good wind was driv-

ing her towards the Tortugas and the Straits of Florida through which she would pass, then into the Atlantic and square away for Bilboa on the extreme northern coast of Spain through the Bay of Biscay, always erratic and dangerous, and now war-infested.

In his anxiety about Bates, the crew and ship, all new to him, the Captain had not again thought of the new cook during the time they were getting the ship under sail and on the course she would hold for several days without change.

This accomplished, he left the deck and went below, and was making the first entry in the log when he heard some one enter the cabin.

"Captain Tilden, shall I serve your dinner now?" in a voice slightly shattered and tremulous still from recent illness.

"Yes, all right—oh, what is your name, cook?—and you haven't signed the articles yet?" he asked absently while completing the entry.

"No, sir, I have not."

Captain Tilden got the instrument, moved the light slightly and offered the cook his pen without looking up.

The cook came to the corner of the desk and in a fine but shaky hand scrawled "Jim Conroy" on the articles.

"You have been advised you are signing to go

through the war zone?" the Captain asked perfunctorily.

"Yes, sir," came promptly with a modulated palpably assumed deference.

"Now—'Jim' is it?—you can bring my supper."

As soon as the cook had gone, he said to himself:

"That's an odd chap; I bet he originated in well-to-do quarters, and that he's educated. One can tell something of their life story in the way they respond to a simple question.— It's most astonishing."

He got up and glanced through the sliding door into the dining room adjoining.

"It's neat and he knows how to set a table," was the mental comment as he observed the spotless cloth and the china and silver the boy had found unaided and placed invitingly.

The Captain went back on deck; it was now fairly dark; not a shore light was visible.

"When did we lose the harbor light?" he asked the man at the wheel after peering into the binnacle.

"Only a few minutes, sir."

The Captain went over to the starboard and struck a match to read the log.

"Better than eight knots with a fair breeze. We'll squeeze her up to ten knots when I get to know

her better." He was friendly with the Gulf of Mexico, but didn't trust her. That time of the year she was deceitful and tricky. Though often placid and balmy, in November she was dam and sire to tornadoes and destroying hurricanes changing from the laudable delights of usefulness in a twinkling to an infernal delight in violence and death.

"If the termagant can only be withheld from brawling beyond a stiff wind until I make the Straits, we'll be all right," was the Captain's reflection.

As he went below to the cabin he noticed the vacant Mate's room. "The cabin wouldn't be so lonesome with the right kind of a Mate," he thought. He passed into the dining room. Again he sensed that indescribable something for which a man unconsciously craves—just what it was he could not have put in words for all that his eyes could note before him was a very attractively laid table. He mentally congratulated himself on having drawn a prize in the cook.

"I hope his health improves," he wished.

Jim entered as soon as the Captain was seated to inquire about his customary evening drink, and left at once to get it.

The white cap and coat improved the boy's appearance so much that an exclamation of approval

almost escaped the Captain. Usually he preferred to help himself, but he did not mind the lad standing by offering him sugar and cream for the unusually good coffee.

"How do you find things in the galley, Jim?"

"All right, sir; am I to come to you for stores or to go to the Mate?"

"The stores are here," jerking his thumb towards the next room forward. "Come to me for the key." He wondered if Bates, by attitude or remark, had inspired the question. On small sailing vessels the Captain as the head of an oversize family has all keys and divides the steward's duties with the cook, who is usually private steward to the Captain.

"Have you been to sea before?"

"Not as cook; I explained that to Mr. Simmons."

"Oh, it's all right; I can see now you'll get along nicely as soon as you get used to the ship's routine." His voice was reassuring as he noted the boy's concern over the question.

"I hope so."

"There is nothing difficult. Give the crew all the food they want." The Captain hesitated. He thought he heard voices in the gangway outside the cabin; then he continued: "A sailor given good food will usually give good service.

"You see," he went on, still listening for the voices outside, "the crew necessary to work a ship of this size is so small that it's a little hard to arrange." Here he stopped; the voices grew plain enough for him to hear Bates' voice above the rest, somewhat excited. They were coming towards the cabin. He glanced at Jim, who evidenced no concern at the rap on the casement of the open cabin door.

"Come in," bade the Captain, laying down knife and fork.

Bates tore off his cap as he came in, and greatly agitated held up a goodly sized market basket, gasping:

"One of the crew just found it!" then held it full arm towards the Captain as though it might contain a serpent or explosive.

"What is it, Mr. Bates?" asked Captain Tilden quietly, searching Bates' face, but still taking in both the cook and the heads that were now visible in the doorway.

"Look at it!" Bates exclaimed suspiciously. Gingerly he placed the basket on the table opposite the Captain and in full light of the hanging lamp.

Captain Tilden rose deliberately, went around the table and caught with his thumb and finger a white cloth that projected slightly over the side of the basket. He started back in consternation. He

scanned the suspicious Mate whom he thought might be acting, the still expressionless countenance of the cook, and the grinning faces in the doorway. Every eye was on the Captain to witness what they could not believe possible.

In the light "Red Oak's" big Roman nose and straight upstanding hair gave him fierce aspect, not belying his name. This, however, soon began to soften. He raised his eyes and smiled downward; there was joy in every lineament of both face and body. A little child smiled up at him from the bottom of the basket!

CHAPTER III

CAPTAIN TILDEN'S first meal aboard the *Durland* was to remain unfinished. Jim, the cook, seemed to know this and deftly removed it and the men all left with Bates.

Captain Tilden was Master of the ship, but not of created human life. Inherent power of command, long arms, great chest and sturdy legs availed nothing in the presence of this helpless child. This thought sent his upstanding hair higher and straighter as he looked down the length of his eagle-like nose, realizing how utterly incapable he or any one aboard was to do a mother's part for this infant, age and sex yet unknown.

Lifting tiny fists, it squirmed, its miniature face preparing for a wail or another winning smile. But instead, it calmed and contemplated the big man standing over it.

The Captain was so moved his blood began to race through his veins. All of his father love was aroused. In a little baby's helplessness lay a greater power than in an army made up of the able-bodied men of the world. It was the power of Heaven which the little helpless infant brought so close that

its beatitudes were inducted, influxed into the giant breast and filled his heart to overflowing. The long arms reached out and took the baby from the basket when its unease was again evidenced.

"Hungry, of course," the Captain murmured, and touched the galley buzzer. "So soft, so tender and fragile—even smoothing its silky hair back, the rough hand might hurt—only a mother could handle it right," were the strong man's reflections.

Jim responded so promptly to the sound of the buzzer he must have been pondering on the Captain's dilemma and anticipating the summons.

"Jim, do you know anything about a baby's food?" Tilden stopped in front of the cook as if to let the infant exhibit its power and win him over too.

"I know a little; I'm the oldest of the family—condensed milk diluted and warm is all right." As he replied there hovered about his mouth the trace of a smile and he looked tenderly down at the child who without the use of any of the five senses, or strength or speech had in a few minutes won for itself food, a place of abode, and raiment.—

"I'll do my best," he declared, anticipating the Captain's request, then added: "Shall I take him to the galley?" and at the Captain's nod of assent, continued: "I will arrange some kind of a feeding bottle while the milk is heating."

Captain Tilden was somewhat reassured by the way the cook took the child and held it in his arms—thin arms— "Better suited to hold an infant than the bag he carried aboard," was the Captain's unconscious reflection as his glance followed the pair.

"Jim, will you ask the Mate to report?" he called after him.

Bates entered hurriedly, cap in hand. Again Tilden felt somewhat irritated. He wanted to tell him to put his cap back on his head, but refrained.

"Mr. Bates, what do you know about this stowaway?"

The Mate sat down, crossed his legs, covering his hands in his lap as though through habit, and leaned forward, his small narrow spaced eyes glittering.

"It was the simplest thing in the world. You know we cast off as soon as that load of vegetables and groceries came aboard. As the tug dropped us and everything set, the heavy stuff was going below and the rest coming here to the storeroom, some one heard a yap from a basket among the small stuff coming this way. He was scared to death until we found it was a brat."

Captain Tilden dropped his chin; he was trying to decide where the Mate exaggerated and what

he was leaving untold. He decided to call the men and verify his report.

"We can't make back to port?" he asked, more to pump Bates.

"Rotten luck to turn back!" the Mate exclaimed, at once agitated. "The wind is just right for the Tortugas and Straits. We would have to beat back; there every man would desert you—hoodoo, you know. How about touching at Key West? We wouldn't lose no time that way."

"But who is going to care for the child until we get there? It's hard to find a wet nurse among a crew of sailors."

Bates smiled grimly; it was the Captain's predicament, not his.—

"Well, when I came past the galley, the cook had it sitting on the meat block, sucking a rag teat."

The Captain lowered his head so that the shaggy brows nearly hid his eyes, and asked himself: "Did he, Bates, have a hand in bringing aboard the stowaway?"

"We can't have the brat forward among the crew, that's a cinch!" exclaimed Bates. "If the cook will do it, why not let him come aft in my old quarters in the cabin until we can get rid of the kid?"

He finished by jerking his thumb over his shoulder toward the vacant room, and then restoring it

under his cap. "Where does the cook spring from?"

"Mr. Simmons got him in New Orleans. He told me nothing of him except that he was a discharged convalescent from the Navy," the Captain replied by way of inviting confidence. "How did the crew like his first mess?"

"Passable, but he's no sea cook."

"He doesn't pretend to be. Soft on that half whine, Bates."

"Oh, I can eat anything."

"I know you can. Now, Mr. Bates, you will get the food that I do, and whatever it is, there's to be no complaint. I know your reputation for rowing with the cooks. Every employment agency in Mobile knows it's a disease with you. When I took you back, you definitely promised that my orders would be obeyed without change or even suggestion. If the crew complains about the cook, that's important; report it to me at once, but you must be sure of the facts. In fact, I warn you that you are to stay out of the galley and let the cook alone."

"Oh, yes, I know—I didn't mean that," said Bates hurriedly.

"Just so you understand. The cook is the only prospect we've got to care for this child. If he will not do it, we must go head into this wind and beat back to Mobile losing two or three days."

"Simmons would be crazy," gasped Bates.

"Why wouldn't he be?—however, we're not going back.—

"Now, Bates, send in the man who first found the basket and any of the men who were there when he did. The log must be very complete about a thing like this."

"All right, Captain."

"Bates has changed heart like a skunk loses its stripes. Like that animal he can make an awful smell if not handled right, that's plain enough," said the Captain to himself, resting his elbow on the desk and grasping his forehead.

He examined the men carefully, but learned nothing new.— Something moved in the basket; they reported it to the Mate, who took it at once to the cabin. All agreed that it must have come with the groceries, or about that time.

"As you go by the galley, ask the cook to come in," the Captain said when dismissing the last one. Jim came in, talking to the child he carried in his arms, and who had fed sufficiently well from a rag teat fitted to a small sauce bottle.

He placed it back in the basket on the edge of the table. The Captain stepped in front of it. Uncontrollably, his mind went back to his own child, now gone. But he quickly squelched the thought. Not, however, before the shaft had reached his heart.

The babe began waving its arms up and down as though it would fly, breathing audibly at each motion. Tilden put up his hand; the child's tiny soft fingers closed on his thumb, pushed and pulled. The man's face lighted magically. This virgin innocence and trust made joyful tugs at his heart.

Tilden looked at Jim, who remained waiting for possible instructions or orders. The boy's face looked less emaciated as it lit up when his glance lingered on the basket and its contents. The twenty pounder had won with him too, without force or speech.

"Jim, two important items for the log—sex and age?"

On the full but fever-marked lip a smile hovered a moment.

"How old?—less than ten months, I should say—and—can't you see it's a girl?"

"Um—m—yes—good and bad all at once. Girl at any age on a ship—" he resumed, leaving one hand in the basket. "Jim, we're in a bad fix. A girl baby—my personal choice—but on a ship with fourteen men, outbound on a month's winter voyage, through war waters to a foreign port—no clothing or food for an infant except canned milk—time vital—" he hesitated and looked down at the child who was trying to get his great thumb into its mouth,—then back at Jim who ventured:

"I have read that a baby has been a favorable omen ever since ships were—every man has peeked into the galley since—"

"Eh—yes—I know; but submarines—we can touch at Key West in a few days and put it ashore there with little delay."

"She is good-natured, I think," Jim ventured, sensing the Captain's drift; "that ought to be managed."

"But your work will seem heavy at first—"

"Oh, I think not; and she might keep me from getting lonesome."

"I was thinking—you see Mr. Bates quartering forward leaves an empty room here in the cabin which you could take for the time; between us we could manage until we touched."

"Oh, is that necessary?"

"The forecastle is no place for a girl of any age. You move into the Mate's room. We'll get along somehow; we can't go back to port."

"I'll gladly do my best."

"Jim, that's all the angels can do," the Captain replied prosily, but jubilant.

This time Jim took up the human burden with a nebulous yet distinct impression that its advent was distinctly important.

"That boy is all right; dignity cannot be hidden any more than the leopard's spots or the camel's

hump," thought the Captain, observing the cook critically, but mighty relieved that he had cleared the hurdle without touching.

With zest he turned to the details of commencing a hazardous voyage. The care of half a million dollars' worth of floating property that had only a fifty-fifty chance of reaching its destination, was no light responsibility.

CHAPTER IV

Captain Tilden's first night at sea satisfied him that being Master of a vessel was a load that still fitted his soul and the sturdy body that had earned him the sobriquet "Red Oak." He was at once the governor and balance wheel of a machine composed of fourteen units drawn at random, all united, now in the act of transporting great money value through dangerous waters.

He awakened easily and quickly resumed sleep as when he had left the sea years ago. Of the midget stowaway, though within easy sound, he heard nothing. How and why the child was placed aboard such a ship bound for such waters, and how he could humanely dispose of it, were problems for the next day. He might be overloading Jim, his cook, a most important unit, and thereby weakening his organization besides doing great injustice to the boy.

In the morning, however, after noting how tastefully his breakfast had been served, and that Jim looked actually somewhat rested, his conscience dropped that whip. He realized again that conclusions reached late at night, especially just before

sleep, had frequently to be reversed after breakfast.

"How did you manage with the stowaway?"

"No trouble at all last night, Captain, other than feeding it," Jim replied in an improved voice.

"How about clothes? There was little or no clothing, was there?" the Captain asked, beginning breakfast.

"Clothing is a problem," Jim began soberly. "The bottom of the basket was cushioned with some necessary things. The men are interested," Jim went on; "and at mess this morning some of them offered garments to be remodelled, as they said, and two or three of them said they could sew."

"Oh, I see!" the Captain exclaimed. "If they take an interest, our trouble will be quartered; an old sailor can do about anything if he wants to."

"They have named her 'Princess Ann,' and say she has to go on the articles and stand watch with the rest," Jim volunteered, with the slightest twinkle in his eyes.

The Captain was more interested in the cook and the stowaway than in the forecastle pleasantry.

"An apron, though often a badge of servility, can ennoble," he thought. The platitude had popped into his mind as he was making a critical, deliberate inspection of the cook's personality.

Jim had somehow or other found time to shave.

His skin was fine, as was also his thick black hair; his femininely-arched brows might have been charcoaled. The tall bib of the apron held by a broad strap around his neck, concealed his chest.

"If he were only as good below as he is above the shoulders, Apollo would rate second," was the Captain's silent comment.

"Well, Jim, if the weather holds, and I guess it will, we will be off Key West to-morrow night where we can land the youngster. In the meantime, if it's too hard—?"

"Oh, it's not too hard; the baby sleeps most of the time; the men said they would fix a place for her. The galley is plenty large enough and everything is convenient—I hope I can please the crew and—Mr. Bates."

"You have made headway with the men; I think Mr. Bates will be reasonable." The Captain easily caught from the boy's tone that Bates was either at it again, or was creating uneasiness in one of his many devious ways.

"I will inspect during the morning and see that everything is all right," the Captain went on. "We must be watchful for any signs of disease that we may have taken from here."

"Captain Tilden, do you mean that you want me to report anything I notice?" the cook asked.

"Yes, anything affecting the crew's health."

Free from the superstitious beliefs in signs and omens that curse seagoing men, Captain Tilden knew that safety and despatch depended solely upon equipment and knowledge of its strain resisting power, coupled with constant vigilance.

He had often noted with amusement the ignorance of the average landsman concerning the present-day followers of the sea. He had seen that his own dress and language were disappointing to the otherwise well informed. They doubted that he was a sailing vessel master because he did not have a rolling gait, exude salt, and red-nosed, continuously nurse a bottle of rum; dress like a pirate, and use the semi-savage, thirteenth century sea vocabulary.

Tilden had been twenty years ahead of his time, but to-day he was gratified to see the educated, up-to-date men that were taking sea berths and conducting themselves as would any manager or superintendent of an operating plant worth a half million or more.

The fifth of November was the season when tornadoes and near tornadoes were expected in the Gulf region, and he knew he must brace himself.

Methodical and exacting to a punctilio, he had examined every sail, ring, stay, lashing and gear of every sort on and above the main deck, and ordered

some change. The first day out he felt a singular relief as though the old life welcomed him back. The sea, itself, is always mild, gentle and loving. It is the sea's enemy that makes all the trouble.

It was past eleven in the morning before he got down between docks where the galley of the *Durland* was located amidships. Dinner preparations were in full progress, but at that moment Jim was not there.

Astonished, he stopped with one foot on the raised threshold. It had not only been swept, but had been scrubbed and put in faultless order. The pots and polished pans and range were larger, but somehow the savory odor of the cooking and scrupulous neatness took him back not to the home of his married youth—an unpleasant memory softened by death—but to the days of his boyhood and his mother's kitchen.

"Odors are wonderful things," he thought; "I believe Hell is separated from Heaven by the nature of its odors," and he stepped inside. He seemed invited by the flashes of red burning fuel in the range. The galley was narrow but reached quite the beam's length and was well lighted from both sides.

"By Heaven, this boy is a find! Mr. Simmons seemed to be sure about him," he recalled, and his estimation of the manager-owner rose. He got

half way across the galley before he saw it, then he suddenly came to attention and uncovered. Swinging well out of harm from the main deck beams near the open port side, was Princess Ann soundly sleeping.

The Craftman's hand had slipped in placing Captain Tilden's head on the broad base. It seemed to be too far back and more so now when he upheld his cap and elevated his big square chin with delight at confronting the child.

Suspended by four canvas ropes was a sail cloth sling so cleverly wrought that with a slight adjustment, the Princess had either bed or chair that would remain perpendicular whatever the position of the vessel.

When the Captain heard Jim's footsteps, he was still drinking in the child's face, hesitant to move outside its angelic aura.

Jim seemed afraid to smile as he put down an armful of canned goods, but his eyes gave evidence of his pleasure as he waited for the Captain to speak.

"The men have it cleverly rigged," was Tilden's comment in a subdued voice.

"Yes, they must have made it during the night; they brought it in this morning. She makes no trouble; never cries. They made another rig just like this for the cabin room, but Mr. Bates would

not let me put it up as he said she—it—would go ashore to-morrow."

"Your galley is perfect, Jim," Captain Tilden observed, glancing about, apparently unmindful of the implied question in Jim's last remark.

"I'll have no trouble now after getting it once cleaned," the cook said with a slight pride in his voice.

"Yes, with a good start and a little care, you can always be shipshape." The Captain then went forward and passed through a small door in the forward bulkhead, wondering if the convalescent cook would be able to keep it up.

It is so essential to have a distinct picture of the forward part of the barquentine that a landsman's locution will be adopted as an aid. About midway between the bow and stern, down one flight of narrow stairs on the extreme left—port companionway—from the main-top-deck, was the ship's kitchen—galley—a narrow room reaching across the vessel except space for the stairs from above, and a passageway towards the front end of the ship, which for convenience and fire protection must be kept clear of obstruction.

Along the passageway, forward some hundred feet, about thirty feet from the extreme bow, was an iron watertight partition—bulkhead—reaching clear across the vessel.

In front of this bulkhead was the crew's quarters and an upright steam boiler coal bin and—donkey—oscillating engine used for loading and unloading. The coal bin was left of the passage against the vessel's port side.

Captain Tilden had just entered through the only opening in the bulkhead and was in front of Bates' room. The iron partition formed one side —the coal bin the other. It was made of undressed lumber, and was narrow, dark and most uncomfortable looking, but it gave him easy access to the galley and was within hearing of the bunks.

The Captain passed by, respecting the privacy of his Mate's quarters. Several times during the day, however, he wondered about his choice.

On small American ships the Captain and Mate stand watch and watch usually four hours on and four hours off.

"Mr. Bates, I don't like the way this mizzen sail behaves; there're indications now of some lively weather. Bend on the new one while the weather is good," instructed the Captain when Bates came on watch at noon.

"That sail has been on for a long time and stood some bad blows," demurred Bates.

The Captain's lips came together. He walked to the weather side watching some light clouds scudding across to the westward, read the log, and passed

back of the Mate without a reply and went below.

"We ought to be off Key West in twenty-four hours if the wind doesn't change," he said to himself, cocking his ear for movement above. Bates was obeying his order, but from his voice which he caught occasionally through the open skylight, he seemed to be astride a peeve. The Captain wondered if this would happen every time the Mate got an order.

Captain Tilden regarded a ship's crew as a big family which one nagging, pessimistic, gossiping member can keep in a perpetual state of unrest and semi-gloom which is inefficiency personified—a tremendous economic loss besides the unhappiness of being thus constantly bedeviled.

He ate his mid-day meal mostly in silence. He wondered why he had not seen the child or heard it cry but did not ask Jim, who was there as usual.

He made up his log and prepared for a nap:

"If I only had a woman on board—three or four hours' loss, possibly more at Key West before I can properly dispose of her. I will not just toss her ashore even for the sake of the ship.— Anyhow," he pondered, "God gives life and His inscrutable ways of guiding it and bringing it to flower, I myself can never fathom—why, for instance,"—he pondered again for the thousandth time—"did I

have to lose my only child on whom I would have lavished every care, when other children apparently far less fortunate, are let live, only to starve, or perhaps become criminals?—

"Prudence—yes, after exercising prudence, God-given with life," his mind went on, "why worry, why try to usurp the function of the Infinite who provides amply for every created thing? Life here in this world is but the primary school; we go to advanced grades in the next as soon as we are ready." This comforting thought stayed with him as he slept.

He awoke in time to take the deck from Bates at four. Again when he went down at six, he noticed about the waiting table a daintiness so uncommon at sea. During this watch, a wind held but toward eight o'clock a change was indicated.

"The mercury is sinking, Mr. Bates—be on the lookout for a change," he said when the Mate came up promptly to relieve him. "Call me if there's anything big."

If Bates replied, Tilden did not hear him as he went below. He didn't care particularly as he knew any change would awaken him, which it did an hour before his time to go on deck at midnight.

He heard Bates bawl out an order to double reef —he could not hear what. Slippered and in his sleeping clothes only, he hurried up on deck after

glancing at the clock, barometer and list of the ship. He saw who was at the helm. He glanced into the binnacle and went to the log. The topsails were all in and everything reefed. The wind had drawn to the westward, increasing to a gale.

"She'll carry the reefs; let her run as she is," he said pleasantly enough. Captain Tilden could see the visor of Bates' cap pointing down, but could not see his face.

"It's coming stronger—we'll lose the cloth."

In the Captain's ears still rang the owner's final injunction: "Speed—despatch!"

"What's a cloth?" the Mate heard above the gale.

In the three words were contempt and a reminder that he did not want advice when there and able to see for himself.

Captain Tilden, while watchful as a cat, dressed deliberately, and ate some cold food which Jim had left on the table before he took the deck. The gale held pretty steady. The bark heeled farther, but she was going her best toward Spain.

"Never mind the bills but deliver the cargo!" he heard again.

"Now is the time to test her—she's got to stand the flog; I'd rather break her here in the Gulf than wait until there is worse danger added to bad weather," Tilden muttered to himself.

He went up again, read the log and returned to estimate his position. Bates and the man at the wheel were drenched by seas breaking across the deck.

"Six hours more—about daylight—on this course and we'll round the Tortugas light; then with wind astern we'll shoot into the Straits; anchor in the roadstead, send the child ashore—" Here he halted. For the first time he tried to work out the details of disposing of a tiny living thing. Was it the trouble and necessary delay that made him frown? —Who would he leave it with?—that is, who would take it? At that moment he could only think of the Police Department. Jim had given him the impression that it was no more trouble than a kitten or canary to take care of.

When Bates came to relieve him at four in the morning, in the darkness he seemed funkish and fearsome.

"Is that man frightened? This is not a real storm—perhaps I imagine it," Tilden thought.—"Two hours more and we'll take it astern," he encouraged the helmsman as a sea struck and solid water was carried far over the vessel. Bates turned his back to it and grasped the wheel.

Tilden did not turn in and as soon as daylight came, he made his way forward examining the chain lashings of the deckload.

"If this doesn't move it, nothing will," he assured himself when he found them all intact. "Before breakfast we'll have it astern," he repeated to the lookout forward, holding on the lifeline with him. "We should pick up the Tortugas light soon."

When they rounded the light which brought the wind fairly astern, every one was glad. They could now have a hot breakfast. Mainsail and foresail, wing and wing, and top royals only reefed before a gale that might merge into a tornado, but was just now rushing them right on their true course.

"Little more than fifty miles to Key West," the Captain breathed; "and if it were not for the stowaway—impossible—impossible to keep it aboard—well, anyhow when ashore I will report to Mr. Simmons," was his train of thought.

At six he sent Bates below for an hour to rest a bit and breakfast.

Captain Tilden sat down on the stern rail. Nothing animate or inanimate within his range of vision escaped him. He saw Bates peer cautiously, stealthily, from the forecastle companion like a prairie dog or a woodchuck.

"Surely that fellow is yellow—my God!—have I got to go into the zone where our chance is sailing through a real storm—" He looked back—giant, hissing seas from the Gulf into the shallower waters

of the Straits of Florida would come as though they would break over the stern rail where the Captain sat watching the *Durland's* head point to dark, flying clouds half zenith; then rush, gravity and wind driven down into the trough, headed for the bottom until her head was three to five fathoms into solid green sea; and then sturdily, joyously, like a playful monster sea fowl, raise her head, throwing tons of water back over her deck.

Wind or water did not seem angry to him; never did. Wind was air rushing to where more air was needed to establish an equilibrium. The needful was seam, stick and sail, sound and living.

A good sailor knew the strength of his seam, the pressure per square foot his sticks and sails would stand and stop before the limit is reached—and if the barquentine would not stand this, what would she do in Biscay, the unreliable?

Tilden's mind reverted to the child.

"I don't believe the smallest thing in Heaven or on earth is accidental—why was that child put aboard?— Maybe to force me to call at Key West for something; but if—if this wind holds, I will lose time; I would pass there pretty fast.— No—nothing of mercy; just ordinary decency demands the child be landed."

He raised his glasses; he could now see the Government Station on the Tortugas; they were display-

ing storm signals. He could dimly see vessels of all sizes in lee shelter.

"If I've to run with bare poles, I don't care—so long as it's in the general direction of Bilboa, Spain!" was his all compelling thought.

Bates stayed below the full hour.

"Tousled, dirty, unshaven, unslept—yellow, cringing yellow is plain in his dark, cloudy eyes," the Captain concluded the moment he saw him.

"Goin' to keep that royal up?"

"Yes, let the royal stay—if it shreds another goes in its place; that's what I got spares for," interrupted Captain Tilden, promptly anticipating the Mate's question. "Everything but the sticks, Mr. Bates."

"The steamers have made the lee—"

"Mr. Bates, I know that, but we are running for northern Spain, and on the last leg we'll pray for weather worse than this—right the way she's pointed now."

Before the Mate could reply, he went below, took off sea boots and oilskins and prepared for breakfast. Even before he was ready, Jim brought it in steaming hot.

He wondered as he greeted him.—

"Jim, did you have trouble with the galley fire before we brought the wind astern?"

"Yes, almost impossible; had to stand and hold

both coffee pot and fire when the deck went straight up; but now her pitching doesn't bother."

"Did you get much water in the galley?"

"Not very much."

"How does Princess Ann stand it?"

"Little children are good sailors; I suppose you know that. Maybe I did wrong, Captain Tilden—Mr. Bates did not approve of it. I put up the swinging crib in the room here in the cabin and she slept right through—and I slept through too," he added, as a sort of confession.

"Perfectly right—how is Mr. Bates interested as long as you're in the cabin? By meridian we'll be able to put Princess Ann on solid ground again at Key West."

"Who will get her?— What will become of her then?" asked Jim.

The Captain looked sharply at him—the voice had been unmistakably tender in tone. He had to brace himself at the table. The seas were worse as they advanced. The vessel would dive for the bottom, then recover so quickly that the cabin deck quite fell from under them, leaving them in mid-air.

"Key West is quite a city and must have—"

"She's such a little thing—and the men have made clothing—" Jim interrupted in cautious but apparently unstudied appeal.

"Jim, you know where we're bound?"

"Yes."

"And I suppose Mr. Simmons told you—he had to tell you—why there's a bonus?" Tilden asked again warningly.

"Yes, a bonus means danger—"

"Did he tell you that it's about an even bet that the *Durland* goes to the bottom, and if we are not hurt by a torpedo—should it strike the ship—we will be in open boats in mid-winter until rescued?"

"Yes; I suppose—I have noticed the boats are provisioned—"

"Well, it being half for and half against, we must be prepared for the worst—the open boat and storms. What could perishing men do with an infant, when struggling for their lives?"

"The men are all interested except Mr. Bates. Sometimes men will work—I have heard they work hard—to save a little girl child." The quiet simplicity of his urging in his thin mending voice; his frail depleted body that withal accommodated itself lithely to the violent pitching of the ship, were not lost on Captain Tilden.

He was having trouble with his coffee—he had to pour it as he drank it from a pot anchored to a sea trough in which his breakfast had been served. He glanced sheepishly at Jim to see if he noticed when the Captain brushed the moisture away. His

own little girl he had watched woefully, helpless to stay the going.

"Jim, another thing you may know. We are going to Spain, poverty stricken, and weak, clubbed into an outward appearance of neutrality by the Allies, but under the table she is grasping the German gold laden hand.— No, it's better for the child, and better for us to put her ashore at Key West."

"With the whole crew, except Mr. Bates, willing and eager that some safe way could be managed?"

"I'd like to keep her aboard, Jim—I really would. Sometimes our feelings—impulses—must let reason decide. I'll see at Key West about having it kept until the return voyage when we can pick her up and take her back to Mobile. I can't think of conditions that would justify a parent in doing anything so unusual as this—" he was interrupted by the Mate calling to him to come up.

"Have her ready to go ashore about noon, Jim," the Captain called back, as he hurried up the companionway.

Bates, with nervous, shaking hand, offered him the glasses and pointed to a row of black spots in the sea to the northward, visible only when the ship was on the crest. What was it about Bates' hands that repelled him so, the Captain asked of himself.

He took the glasses from the Mate with maddening deliberation. He waited for the ship's head to come out of the green sea and rise again to the full force of the hurricane, yet without raising the binoculars. He went over to the log. So sure was his step that his feet were iron clamped to the deck wherever planted. He stood before the speed recording instrument while the ship rose and slid down 'mid two giant seas.

Bates ambled over to him excitedly, bellowing in a state of wild excitement:

"The sails will go any minute."

Captain Tilden raised the glasses and held them long. The row of black spots, about three miles to the north, were the Tortugas, a continuation of the Florida Keys.

His view though made intermittent by the rise and fall of the barquentine, was of fishermen's shanties unroofed; and their boats were either piled on the beach, or adrift. Sailing craft on the lee side evidently had extra anchors out; steamers too, had taken to shelter though fired and smoking, ready to run if they dragged anchor.

Tilden scanned his own ship, then looked at Bates.

"Mr. Bates, double reef."

"Impossible to reef—men will carry away. Aren't the poles enough?"

Captain Tilden for reply moved away. He wanted to give the order himself and send the Mate below for insubordination. Instead he continued:

"I'll take the deck now; stay forward and lend a hand until eight."

Bates, thus propelled, leaped from the poop rail to the deck load and went hurriedly forward.

"His liver is chalk, I'm sure now—a hell of a man I've got. This is exactly the kind of weather we must have to make the zone; he shows yellow all through. I was mistaken—he's not even a seaman. Two years with this bark and I'm the sixth Captain. Whatever it is, Bates, you must show me."

He wanted the best man at the helm,—he sent for Sturgis.

Even with Bates working, it took over a half hour to double reef. The wind increased. He expected the royal to go, but he didn't care. He ordered another ready, also the main and mizzen sails —they might go too. Forging ahead at express speed, up to the Straits towards Key West like a hydroplane or a prehistoric sea fowl—it was no harbor—little more than an open roadstead.

"I can anchor, land the stowaway, and run without taking a tug," thought the Captain.

Captain Tilden laughed when at last it went. The royal burst into shreds like the boom of a cannon that made Bates start as though a shot had

struck him. The man on watch didn't mind bending the new one—their "old man" was proving game.

Faintly he could now see the lighthouse and the low buildings off Key West ahead. The tall palms bowed, strained and quivered with seeming grief and pity for the angry elements. Spray from the bow of the rushing *Durland* smartingly reached his face. He could see Sturgis at the wheel in front of him grit his teeth when it struck him.

"He's got more guts than Bates," was the Captain's thought.

The *Durland* flew as though all the devils in Hell perched upon the seas that momentarily threatened astern.

In another half hour—yes, right now the onrushing air was losing its teeth. There is a marvelous difference between a decreasing motion and an increasing one, though the decrease is but slight. Heavy clouds came.

"If it begins to rain, then I'll know we've got clear outside the big twister; we've had only the very edge anyhow," thought the Captain.

"Sturgis, steer straight for the lighthouse," he instructed, and started below satisfied.

The cabin was empty; Jim's door was ajar. He expected to find him there with the child, ready to land. He pushed the galley buzzer.

Jim came as though his thin legs were lead, and stood just outside the door, reluctant and pale. The Captain was looking at the barometer as if inspiration was to be had from it; his face was burnt and red as though the spray had been live flame.

"Jim, we have evidently been in the edge of the storm and are now running out of it. Have everything ready; we'll leave from the stern. You can go ashore with me, can't you?" the Captain asked, still looking at the glass and wiping his face.

"Yes, I'll be ready, sir."

"That boy acts as though the child were his," Tilden thought as he returned to his watch. Momentarily a queer suspicion flashed into his mind, but he thrust it from him. Somehow he felt like a brute, but at times men in authority have brutish duties. It had to be.

The velocity of the gale continued. He had been in the harbor many times. It was easy to make if one knew how. Coming up the roadstead as they were, a mistake was so easy. He went over to the wheel. To be sure he would explain; he wanted to talk with some one anyhow . . .

"Sturgis, we keep on this course to within twice the ship's length of the lighthouse; then when you get the order, starboard the helm enough to clear the jetty about a half the ship's length only, and we slip into the harbor."

"A port helm would send us out to sea?" Sturgis asked absently, to fix the movement in his mind.

"Yes, a port helm is the seaward course."

"It seems a big loss—we're making such good time now," Sturgis ventured with a little more than usual interest.

"Yes, but we've got to—" here the Captain glanced around and saw Jim in navy uniform sitting on the top step of the companionway with Princess Ann in his arms.

"He seems used to children," the Captain reflected.

Captain Tilden looked at the lighthouse less than half a mile away, and saw Bates making his way aft over the deckload, and the men on watch as well as those who should have been asleep, gathered about the forecastle gangway, like chickens coming out after a storm.

He walked over towards Jim who was fondling the baby. It was so trusting, so tiny and helpless; so completely unaware of what was going on around it. It could not know that the ship's crew was centering upon it, and the heavy laden ship being maneuvered for it.

The sailors had sacrificed their clothing to provide raiment. Two little soft quilts cleverly wrought from sail cloth were rolled up and laid on the deck

with the skillfully, painstakingly made swinging crib and chair.

The Princess was in splendid humor. The sail-cloth cap, startlingly clever, neatly made and stretched over a form, fit the little head as if cast for it, and it made her look older. As the Captain approached, she looked full at him, brought both tiny fists up, straightened her back and smiled as she had the first time he had looked at her in the basket.

The Captain was startled—by what, he could not define. The second time, and at a crucial moment she had smiled at him as if she knew and reasoned adultly; but this time it was as though Jim had the power and made her do it.

Outwardly unobservant and stoical, he returned to the wheel watching the approaching turning point at the lighthouse. Three ship's lengths more only! Bates had come to the quarter deck. Captain Tilden could see men from the lifesaving station just beyond the lighthouse, looking at the barquentine as a phantom racing with the storm, depending on no slightest mishap in such wind.

Captain Tilden as if magnet drawn, moved back toward Jim and the baby. Jim was looking down, sorrowful enough but manifestly resigned. The wind had eased, but was yet a stiff gale.

The Captain stood near looking down at the helpless infant, then faced about. With his head well back, and affixed to the deck by an invisible weight, all unaware that every eye and mind on the ship was on him, he gazed at the lighthouse ahead. Fifty feet more and he must give the order to go on the jetty. The men watching by the lighthouse held their breath aghast—was the Captain crazy to come so close?

"Port your helm!" came the sudden order, just loud enough for Sturgis to hear, and who, though an old seaman, had thought the order would never come. He glanced at the Captain, as he threw his weight on the wheel to see if he had heard aright; he had, of course, expected a starboard helm that would take them into the harbor.

"Hard over!"—but before he got the order, the ship's head began swinging to the port, dashed within a few feet of the lighthouse jetty and headed seawards—on to Spain with no stop intended until they touched the Azores.

Bates almost ran across the deck.

"How are you goin' to get the brat ashore now?" he bawled, unguarded, as though by this act their positions were reversed and he were the Captain.

To Captain Tilden, however, he was as though non-existent, as he took up the megaphone and in a

full, round, penetrating voice haled the Lighthouse Tender:

"Report *Durland* bound for Bilboa, Spain—all well aboard."

The men at the lighthouse were puzzled when cheers from the crew followed this speech.

Jim's eyes filled. He gathered the Princess Ann and her belongings and was quickly disappearing below when he became aware that Bates' fiercely glittering eyes followed him. Tilden faced the Mate stonily.

"Mr. Bates, it's twelve; take the watch. Make full sail—your course now is northeast by east, half east!"

CHAPTER V

THE Captain went below and took off his sea boots and oilskins and made his entry in the log. He sat back in his chair. His thick body filled it; his head came forward, his chin down as far as it would come. His pupils now near the upper lids, sensed nothing.

"Am I really fitted to be Master of a ship?" he asked himself. He knew his heart had melted for the child—why, he did not know; pure sentiment maybe. He should have sent her ashore; her presence would cause no end of trouble and it was cruel to take a child on such a voyage, but he still heard the crew cheering him for not sending her on land.

He knew every man had seen Jim gather the bit of innocence in his arms with the rapidity and grace of grief suddenly assuaged, and the tears he had tried to hide. They had all, except Bates, given him a glance of thanksgiving, registering devotion and loyalty.

"Have I made a mistake?—I don't believe it!—If loyalty could be weighed, measured, and packaged marketably, it would bring ten thousand dollars the pennyweight. By this act have I not won the crew,

and what is that not worth on a voyage of this kind? Every one except Bates, and he is a perfectly rotten limb. I wonder why he tries to hide his hands.—He is an ass—he steers like a ship with nothing but headsails, but withal, cunning; I am sorry I brought him.

"Wonderful, wonderful is the Providence of God on land and sea!" This thought brought peace; he was again in clear light. A waif, a stowaway, embryonic mother of generations of humanity, at once a leaven for good and the strength that would bind rough-hewn men into a single unit, with a single purpose, was how the Captain now clearly saw the little child.

He arose slowly and went to the room occupied by Jim. He tapped lightly—no response. He opened it gently; yes, the babe was there, asleep on Jim's bed. Vaguely he recalled Jim's going; it was mess time. Tilden entered the room wondering at the perfectly relaxed, helpless, virgin innocence, and as soon as within its sphere or aura, there came a singular joy.

"Would every one return to a similar innocence in the life to come that they may convey this beatitude?—If so, what delight," was his reflection.

Gently bidden by its soul's angelic guardian in sleep, the child opened her eyes upon the man with such a massive upper body standing near. It raised

one pinkish hand about the size of the end of the Captain's thumb, and hesitatingly let it drop. Then it raised both arms and one little foot. Captain Tilden awkwardly reached over and took the child in his arms. He felt the warmth of its soft, tender body as it pressed against his great chest. It cuddled there and became part of him, as a beautiful tender vine clinging to and beautifying a rugged, massive oak.

There within the sphere of innocence of the babe, his heart swelled; his dry, parched soul, denied the lasting fructification of paternity, was strangely watered; its withered folds magically opened and glowed serenely.

The uncomprehended moved him out past the table Jim had laid for him, through the chart room to his curtained bed. Against the white pillow he tenderly sat the babe, then stepped backward to better view her. Strangely impelled, he sank slowly upon his knees. Taking his eyes from the infant, he bowed his head.

One's thoughts when all alone, uninfluenced, reveal one's attitude toward God and the created world. They come then from our ruling passion, be it desire or be it love; every human soul has a special motivation.

The Captain did not hear Jim enter, as his footfall too had softness of touch. Jim, in moving

around the table, somehow glanced through the parted curtains and could see the child and Captain Tilden kneeling before it. He tiptoed out of the cabin, smiling to himself at the Captain's spontaneous self-revealing attitude.

In a moment more, Bates bawled down the companionway raucously, resentful:

"Sail is all made, sir."

The Captain came back from the big world where charity rules, into this little one to cope with malice, revenge, hatred.

Bates' small, narrow spaced, grayish eyes, wrinkled and cross-seamed face and talon-like hands mirrored a diseased, unnatural soul that thrived on hate. Hatred always produces wrinkles.

When the cook returned with the food, the Captain was at the table. Princess Ann's tiny body was ranged across his barrel-like chest, drawing vitality with each concerted gentle breath. The great heart beneath it, pumping rhythmically and true, drew the tiny one into the same time and tune with such force that the baby became a part of the man, and when Jim reached for it with tender grasp so that the Captain could eat, the tiny arms and hands, so soft and velvety, tried to hold on, and fretted as it might if deprived of celestial support and care.

The real function of the Mate of a ship—the first

officer—is as working advisor to the Master. At least he should be of sufficient capacity and parts to act as a foil—something for the Master's mind to react upon.

Captain Tilden felt keenly not having such a person on board. Bates, in addition to being impossible in such a capacity, the Captain was sure he had to be closely watched as a poor seaman and a craven. Jim's hints also indicated that he was easily capable of mischief. He had, however, a bravado that misled for a time. He had been Mate of the *Durland* for two years and had worn out five captains. Captain Tilden definitely decided he would find out the reason why.

"This man—no man, nor any number of men shall stand in my way. I have taken this ship to reëstablish myself on the sea. I have signed to take ship and cargo to Bilboa and return, and shall do it if humanly possible," was Tilden's mental vow.

He had decided to touch at the Azores and there wait for a favorable moment to break across the last of the Atlantic into the Bay of Biscay; a water no cargo vessel would enter without convoy protection from submarines, which, however, in a continued storm were little better than surface boats.

Favorable sailing weather prevailed and they were making record time. As they worked north and east, as usual at that time of the year, the Atlantic

was turbulent, but not enough to prevent them making good time. From the Azores to the coast of Spain he wanted the wildest weather ever produced.

Three or four days after leaving the Florida Straits, Captain Tilden was making daily inspection, during his watch from eight to twelve. Thus employed, he had halted in the gangway. Through the tiers of short timber, from the cabin to the galley companionway, there came the sound of voices. At first it was indistinct, but when he came closer to the opening, Jim's voice, clear and distinct brought him up short.

"Mr. Bates, I know your sort and being Mate, I cannot stop your nasty tongue, but you can go too far even with that—" His voice had suddenly grown steady and ominous, but well controlled.

Amazed that Bates would violate his definite order, Tilden's first impulse was to indignantly face him in the act, but on second thought he shook his head and turned away.

Bates had a maggot on the brain that was now working. A nasty scene was being enacted in the galley. He had one leg across the corner of the galley table like an impudent rough neck. Princess Ann was asleep, swung in the opposite end of the galley. Jim stood between them with his hand resolutely on the drawer that held the big galley knives.

Bates gave a coarse laugh.

"Oh, I see, you little snake; you think your bite's poison. I'll toss the brat overboard like a rat, and spoil your game living in the cabin!"

Had Captain Tilden heard this, he would not have been able to resist the itch in his hand for a hold on Bates' scruff.

"Mr. Bates, men like you are hard to please. I know your kind—your cheap tricks. I am doing my best to please every one. You can't understand that, but this may sink into your brain: You, or a whole colony like you will not frighten me—but if you attempt to touch that child with those hands, I am ready, and you will find it out!"

"I've heard such noise before, lots of times," cut in Bates, but without energy. The thunder in the attitude of the slim, spare boy had reached him, but as some one not quite sane, he continued and leered back through the galley door:

"You're fiddling on the wrong string. You think the Captain can save you, but he's—" his voice dwindled away.

Jim did not hear the finish, he was so relieved that Bates had gone. He got out his dust cloth. Where Bates' leg had touched the table he applied the cloth vigorously as if he had left filth or vile contamination. Suddenly he stopped, his mind more tolerant.

"Maybe he can't help it," and his cloth passed over the surface gently, almost coaxingly, but the steely glitter did not wholly leave his eyes.

"In this short time the quarrel has become a feud," the Captain decided while going back to the deck.

Although Jim invariably stood by during his meals and had every opportunity, even invitation, he had not more than hinted at friction with or his dislike for Bates. At such times, the chat was about the waif, castaway, the tiny human life brought to—or thrust upon them. Any human being is an endless source of speculation because possessed of an intelligence of infinite creation. Yet there are some who think they know something about human beings, including themselves!

Neither by tone, accent, glance, gesture or word did Jim give any hint of a previous knowledge of the child, or how it came to be stowed away on such a timber ship bound into such waters. That Bates had such knowledge was neither confirmed nor dispelled by his behavior, which was both brutal and vulgar.

Bates' conduct appeared neither cautious nor tactful and yet that might be only an artful blind.

"I don't see quite enough of him," reflected the Captain. "Why, for instance, he quarters forward in that hole instead of the cabin, I must know.

Better let him think I'm easy a little longer."

When Bates came on watch at twelve, he gave no hint of having had a row with the cook. It was fresh in Tilden's mind, however, when he went down for food.

"Jim, when looking over the ship this morning, I did not get as far forward as the galley. Is everything snug?" he asked casually, after a time.

"I think so—the best I know," replied Jim easily, glancing towards the skylight through which Bates could probably hear.

"Jim, are you improving in health?—your color is better."

"Oh, yes, and I know I'm stronger."

"Are you eating? You must do something to flesh up and fill those breeches; they flap like you were hove to in a gale."

Jim looked away.

"Give me time," was all he said.

"How is the Princess?"

"She could not be less trouble—eats and sleeps as though born at sea."

"Does the crew still show interest?"

"Oh yes, more than ever. They are working on something for her all the time. Isn't it remarkable how many nice things they can make from pieces of canvas and rope? They made some underwear

somehow by drawing threads from sailcloth, plucking and pounding it soft as down."

"M-m—yes. Devil take him—the Mate seems to be against her?"

"Well—" Jim glanced at the skylight again and slightly lowered his voice—"children evidently irritate him."

"Some of the crew, also?"

"No, not one—the crew is all right."

"Then Bates is not very strong in the forecastle?"

"They laugh, and like you, say he has only head sails set and goes in a circle."

Tilden's eyes lit up.

"That's their way of saying he's short something.— Do you serve Mr. Bates' meals in his room?" the Captain asked after some moments of silence.

"Yes, sir, exactly the same as I do you; I supposed you wanted it that way."

"And with that he complains?"

"Well, sometimes I think he tries to live up to the reputation of Mates, but I think—well—somehow I know that Mr. Bates is unbalanced; at times anyhow—"

"I would like to know as soon as Mr. Bates attempts to abuse any one."

"He wouldn't go far without your knowing it," Jim replied, meeting the Captain's steady gaze for a moment.

Jim did not change as the days went on; the crew was with him. His care of the child who had their devotion almost to the point of worship, set him apart from the other men, and gave him a measure of the awesome respect they held for the babe.

Although the Captain felt that Jim could converse intelligently, it was difficult to draw him into conversation. Tilden knew that the friction between Bates and the cook had not ended, but Jim seemed to think that this was a problem for his own personal solution. The care of the child and his duties as cook completely absorbed his time but the work seemed to agree with him and his health improved rapidly.

Seventeen days at sea and they were approaching the Azores with a steady wind approaching a gale. Captain Tilden on his usual morning watch sent for Sturgis, the carpenter, who had made a good record.

"I want you to go with me to inspect cargo; she's under the strain now of full sail and some sea—anything working loose now will show."

They began in the cabin storeroom. Sturgis was grizzled and had one stern black eye slightly out of

line with a smiling blue one. One was continually in doubt which eye reflected his thoughts.

The carpenter stood looking down the galley's companionway waiting for the Captain to finish examining the last tier of timber next to the forecastle. From where he stood Tilden could only see Sturgis' black eye staring fiercely down the stairs toward the galley, as if the ship had broken in two amidships and the forward part had already gone down. He then saw him gather himself as if to spring down, and then as slowly, relax.

"What is it, Sturgis?"

The man did not seem to hear.

Alarmed, Captain Tilden started toward him. Jim with the Princess, came up past the carpenter and hurried into the cabin.

"We've been expecting it," mumbled Sturgis, still looking galleywards.

"Expecting what?" Tilden moved up beside the carpenter. "What's happened?"

Sturgis breathed deeply.

"Such a bear cat—he took my breath from me," nodding his head vigorously at the mystified Captain. Incoherently he tried to explain as they proceeded to the galley.—

"The Mate—there's something wrong—you ought to know—the thin, wiry kind like the cook, look like sissies but fight like tiger cats when cornered—"

"What's happened, man? Wake up—talk!" Tilden grasped his arm.

"It all happened in a moment. The cook was shaving in the gangway. The Mate came from behind—threw him and darted into the galley. Quick as a cat the cook jumped up and followed him. The Mate came out hell bent with the Princess in his arms. The cook followed, struck him with a galley knife, tore the Princess from him, and flew to the cabin.— The Mate's gone to his quarters bleeding.— The cook's all right, but he—he—" Sturgis stopped when he saw the Captain looking at a small mirror tied just outside the galley. Nearby was a mug and brush with fresh lather on it, and on the deck was the razor with safety attachment, full of lather. The carpenter picked it up and gave it to the Captain. In front of the galley was the blade of a twelve inch butcher's knife—a much used tool in the galley.

Sturgis picked up the severed handle with a grimace of horror.

Tilden picked up the blade, tested its edge with his thumb and glanced knowingly at the carpenter. While the knife was not stained, a little farther along the gangway towards Bates' quarters there was fresh blood on the deck.

CHAPTER VI

Captain Tilden laid the blade and handle of the knife on the galley table, and the razor beside the mug.

Princess Ann's combination chair and crib was empty. The galley was scrubbed to a polish. Although in his mind was a sweeping gale, the Captain moved slowly. Vitally important to his enterprise was the fact that the Mate was both hated and ridiculed by the crew; that he had assaulted the child and cook. The cook had stabbed him—perhaps to death—incapacitating him anyhow.

"With this kind of a cargo, snug and tight as it is, Captain, even if she filled I believe she would still answer her helm," Sturgis remarked as they walked forward towards the bulkhead. They passed through the door and were in front of Bates' quarters. Sturgis elevated his brows and sniffed; an odor came from within, but no sounds.

This box-like affair between decks, without a deadlight, between coalbin and bulkhead, was the only part of the ship Captain Tilden had not critically examined, and as they passed it he wondered why he had so far respected Bates' privacy.

When they returned to the cabin, he asked Sturgis to stop a moment.

"Why have you never tried for something better, carpenter?" he inquired of Sturgis with an idea working in his mind.

"Oh, you see I've no education and I'm too old to start." Ruefully he added: "You can't teach an old dog—"

"To the devil with that stuff, carpenter!"

Sturgis not only halted in his speech, but dropped his jaw. The Captain dropped into a chair, fingered some papers, then turned with a sly smile.

"Sturgis, the man who said that lying thing first, and those who quote it, ought to wallow in Hell until their souls all but perish. They have done untold injury. You're no dog, nor any part of a dog—unless you've been made to think so, and if you were, it's still a lie. Old dogs, as a matter of fact, are taught easier than young ones. How old are you?"

"Past forty, sir," the seaman replied quickly. Turning to look seaward, his laughing blue eye only, was visible.

Sturgis would attract no attention among sailors were it not for that fact that when he was fitted with eyes, by some error or design they were grossly mismated. The Captain was measuring his ample

body and face, his grayish unkempt hair and beard.

"Sturgis, if you'll work for it, you can be a Master before you quit the sea." The carpenter's head dropped forward. Captain Tilden smiled. "A razor and a pair of shears would make you look and feel much younger—try it," he urged, and started to the deck with the sextant.

"Land ho—port bow," called the forward lookout as soon as he saw the Captain.

Instantly the Captain took up the glasses and scanned the sea to the northward. It looked like the shadow of a cloud, but the sailor knew. He returned below and examined the chart. It was the barren coral islands near his course approaching the Azores. He was making this entry in the log when Jim came out of his inner room and stopped at the door.

The Captain glanced a welcome, completed the entry, shut the book and turned about. Jim pushed the portières further back.

After adjusting them, his right hand grasped their folds. His attitude suggested that he was forcing himself, subdued, yet brave.

"Come in and sit down, Jim; you look tired."

"Captain, I want to tell you about the trouble I have had with the Mate."

"I know all about it, Jim, except just how it

started, and that doesn't interest me. The Princess is all right or you would have said so at once." Captain Tilden looked at the cook intently.

Jim met his eyes unafraid, then looked down. His feet crossed and his hands in his lap, he sat on the chair, leaning slightly forward.

"Well, suppose—suppose I have killed him?" he asked, his eyes still casting downward, but in a courageous voice.

Tilden narrowed his eyes as if to resist a smile.

"He will be buried at sea; the log has got to show everything. When we get back to the States—if we ever do—a court will examine the record, and that will likely end it, as self-defense is so evident. But, Jim, he's not dead—and he's not going to die—his sort don't quit so easy. You will never be able to charge your hand with slaughter; though it must have taken a terrible blow to break that knife—and that's just the point; a knife never breaks when its toll is death."

"Then—then—"

"No—no—it's not so bad; the crew is all with you. I not only warned him, but made him promise to stay clear of the galley. In your place I believe I would not have done so well." The Captain brought his hands together, resting his elbows on the arms of the chair, then dropped his chin and eyes and went on slowly, definitely:

"Go about your work as usual; I will look after the Mate."

If Jim had attempted to say anything more than "Thank you," as he started, his voice would have broken.

"One moment, Jim—was the child hurt at all?"

"No—she's sleeping."

When Jim had gone the Captain went up on deck to try and discover if Bates had method behind his actions. He felt that he had, but so far he was in the dark regarding it.

Jim came on deck to announce that dinner was served.

"I will be down soon, Jim," the Captain said.

He then sent for Sturgis.

"Take the ship, Sturgis; run as she is. We'll be at anchor in eight or ten hours."

Sturgis glanced at the compass, then followed the Captain to the companionway.

"I—I—maybe you'd like to know that Mr. Bates is not hurt so much; he's moving about anyway and using smelly medicine."

Captain Tilden had stopped on the third step and the carpenter had stooped low to speak to him.

"Who told the crew, Sturgis?"

"The lookout saw the cook come up, and the Mate left some blood, you know."

"They know about all?"

"Yes, an' he wouldn't be safe in the forecastle or even in his own quarters, if one or two that's asleep now, knew—the Princess has become queen now."

"The crew is all—"

"To a man, Captain; they'd go with you to Hell!"

"All right, Sturgis; keep a wary eye."

"Jim," he began as soon as he was seated, "you have always served Mr. Bates his meals?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"As he asked me to; I put the tray just inside the bulkhead, and rapped on his door."

"To-day as usual?"

"Yes."

"Then you have never been inside his room?"

"No—never."

"You did not know Mr. Bates previous to sailing?" the Captain pointedly asked.

"No—I did not even know that his kind of person would be permitted to live, before I came aboard."

"Have you any reason to believe that he knows anything about the Princess?"

Jim met the steady eye of the Captain and held it unflinchingly.

"No, none."

"Then why the frenzied dislike?"

"Oh, he's been afflicted—this bad streak in him is

a left-over. I just happen to be the one he takes it out on."

"He seems to have some cursed plan though, Jim."

"Yes, I get the same impression at times; something perhaps with which the child or I interfere. I know I have done everything reasonable, yet from the start he has shown hatred for the child and me."

Thoughtfully, Captain Tilden finished eating as Jim looked out upon the great banked cloud of sail, each thread of which was now pushing them on to destiny.

"About as comfortable as having a rattlesnake on board; glittering eyes that see an enemy in every one; spare, sinuous hands, a chalky skin creased deeply and crossed with wrinkles;" the mental picture of his Mate gave the Captain an unpleasant feeling.

"Everything right for Biscay and the zone, but—" his teeth came together hard and his eyes grew stony until he decided that Bates must stay in his hole, or go in irons.

"Jim, did Bates take his food to-day as usual?"

"I have not looked."

The Captain went on deck.

"Sturgis, go forward and see if Bates has taken in his dinner tray."

"Aye, aye, sir."—

"The men say he took it in right away, and that he is still using that smelly medicine," Sturgis soon reported.

As the afternoon wore away, they neared the Azores and a little after dark anchored in the roadstead within easy reach of the guns of the Portuguese Fort. The anchor watches had been set; the Captain was hurrying over the side to go ashore. There were no other ships in the harbor and he was suspicious.

Bates, with lagging step, came up. He nodded weakly to Tilden.

"Captain, I'm not feeling right—I—ought to go ashore and see a doctor."

"All right, Mr. Bates, the small boat is alongside now; you can go with me, if it's serious."

"Oh no, I can wait." Bates leaned against the rail, looking down. "I will go as soon as you come back."

"Perhaps I can get a doctor to come aboard."

"No—no—I want to get a few things too—how long will we be here?"

"I don't know," Tilden replied vaguely, going down the ladder to the boat. "He is not very badly hurt, or he would go now," he thought.

In a half hour he returned hurriedly. He sent for Bates at once. In a few minutes he got the

report that the Mate had gone ashore in the small boat alone.

The information he had obtained on shore was most disquieting. Submarines were operating as far south as the Azores. Wireless warnings were being constantly sent out; even fishing boats had left and hidden themselves.

The Commandant of the Fort advised him that his position in midstream, thirty fathoms, was perilous.

Suddenly inspired, Tilden called for the carpenter.

"Sturgis, we are in great danger lying here; take charge forward. Muffle the capstan—raise the hook without a sound—all hands to making sail!"

"Aye, aye, sir." He started, then turned back. "I—I suppose you know, sir, that the Mate is ashore in the small boat?"

"Yes, Sturgis;—I hate to lose the small boat."

Sturgis' blue eye twinkled as he fairly sprang into the gangway forward.

It seemed but a moment until the *Durland* drifted; then as if by magic, her mainsails rose and she was caught by the piping wind they had had all day.

CHAPTER VII

It was cloudy and quite dark. Lights out, the barquentine, an intangible phantom, gained speed. Every man was jumping, electrified. The schooner rig was quick. From port to starboard Captain Tilden measuredly moved; his face, as though so delivered into the world, was pointed forward.

A spare figure wriggled out of the darkness.

"That you, Jim?"

"Yes, sir—of course you know about Bates?"

"We were in danger, and—"

Jim came closer to the Captain:

"But do you know—"

"Know what?"

"I think he didn't intend to come back."

"You mean he's deserted?" Tilden grasped the cook's arm.

"He took a bag and bundle, and—"

"And what else?" On Jim's arm, small boned but firm fleshed now, his hand tightened to urge his story on.

"No—wait; let's go below."

A small shaded light on the Captain's desk scarcely revealed the cook's figure.

"Jim, this is no time for qualms—the ship—our lives—what else do you know?"

"Captain Tilden, I am trying to tell you. As soon as you started ashore, Mr. Bates came to the cabin—I took the Princess Ann and kept her in the galley—but what could he have wanted here?"

"Just a minute, Jim; get Sturgis."

In less than a minute the cook returned with the acting Mate.

"Sturgis, have double cloth put over all the cabin lights and let me know if Bates' quarters are locked."—Then to Jim:

"Jim, you think going ashore to the doctor was only a stall?"

"He may need a doctor, but he walked all right and handled the boat."

"As soon as I can see in here—what could he have wanted in the cabin?"

Sturgis burst into the cabin with the report that the Mate's quarters were locked.

"Both of you come."

Tilden took up the hooded light, blew it out, and started forward. In front of Bates' door he lit it.

"See if you can shoulder it, Sturgis."

Twice Sturgis tried his full weight against the door before it flew open. Captain Tilden with the light, stepped inside. The place was just long enough for a bunk, and narrow. In fact the Cap-

tain's bulk about filled the hole Bates used in the place of first cabin quarters.

He turned slowly. At Jim and Sturgis he glanced sharply—then another complete circuit.

"Sturgis, and you too, Jim, can see his dunnage is gone. He's deserted. Sturgis, padlock this door and give me the key."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"You come with me, Jim—that cursed smell," he muttered as he turned away from the Mate's narrow quarters and went to the cabin.

Sturgis asked the Captain to light up, that he could be sure the cloth covered everything.

How could he clear Bilboa, a Spanish port, without a licensed Mate?— But why think of that now with eight hundred graveyard miles yet to go?

Jim had lit the lamp swinging over his desk. He heard Sturgis about the skylight. He went on deck. After a turn across and a glance at the compass, he returned.

"That infernal smell here too—the same as in Bates' quarters—the cursed thing clings to my clothing!"

When Jim went out of the cabin, closing the door softly, he sniffed audibly.

Captain Tilden had left the sea twice—the first time it was to undertake a business partnership. After two years the partner had Tilden's life sav-

ings and Tilden had had two years of very exciting and valuable experience. The second time was to fight for the life of his child, his only living relative.

These two periods had broadened and expanded him—especially had they fixed his belief regarding destiny. He reasoned that inconceivable to finite man, the world was created and managed in all detail. Even man would not create a machine and not provide the necessary power and lubrication for its smallest moving part. He had acquired added contempt for the idiomatic nomenclature of seamen. He scorned those who permitted signs, omens, portents to incapacitate. He reasoned that bad luck originates in a man's own heart, and is soon converted into good, when so viewed by those whose minds are open at the top and closed below to infernal influence.

Tilden's head was inclined forward as one at prayer. In reality it was a mighty effort to hold himself rational as something within him commanded. Jim remained within call.

"Jim," Tilden began slowly as if he had just decided him to be dependable, "there's something wrong with this ship. Everything I can see from shoe to topmast is right. She is carrying full sail in a gale; making upwards of eleven knots; and the crew is working with full hearts; but I can't

rid myself of the impression that something's wrong. I don't believe in augury but I do recognize premonition as a fact. Do you notice a peculiar odor here in the cabin?"

Jim came to the door between the dining room and the Captain's quarters. The ship was taking heavy seas on the quarter, giving it a corkscrew motion.

"I did not notice it until after we anchored—until Mr. Bates left. It has a metallic pungency; I have been trying to classify it but I can't."

"I can think of a tinker, a tinner and a flux they use—but I'm afraid we both imagine it—too much excitement, Jim."

"I have been trying—that is—what did Bates want here in the cabin just before going ashore?"

"Was he here long?"

"No, only a few minutes."

"Is anything disturbed?"

"Nothing, Captain, though I haven't looked thoroughly. Could he get anything from your desk?"

"No, I keep the drawers locked," but the Captain bent down and tried each one, then looked at the cook more puzzled still.

"His manner indicated some definite purpose, I thought."

"Jim, we can see now that Bates planned to

desert at the Azores. He seized upon seeing a doctor as the best excuse; a crooked mind cannot be thorough or methodical. I am going forward to look about. A snake has wriggled out of the ship and taken the small boat; but this darned odor I can't classify. It's like the odor of making coffee with bilge water in a chemical works."

Jim's lips parted; a smile lurked about his mouth, the first the Captain had ever noticed. There was something magnetic, loyal, reassuring about it. Subconsciously the Captain wondered, but the thought did not become formulated. Jim's eyes followed the Captain as he arose to go and search forward.

To ride a plunging, rolling ship, those sturdy legs and that casquelike body had been supremely fashioned. The Captain's feet fastened to the deck where they fell; his shock covered head would be carried with dignity on the way to the guillotine.

He halted, scanning the cook with new interest.

"Jim, we are now in the danger zone; any moment we may hear the shot or the torpedo that will send us down. Strange as it may seem, our safety is in storms—violent storms that the Bay of Biscay now in winter time, is sure to furnish. Are you ready?— Have you got the Princess ready to take the small boat on short notice?"

"Oh, yes, the men have talked of nothing else;

they seem more interested in Princess Ann than in themselves."

"An open boat will be bad enough, Jim. The wireless station on the island sounds half-hourly warnings. Torpedoes infest the Bay of Biscay that we are now crossing; if we only get wind and more wind. I do not think I ever wished for storms before. Storms to the submarine are as frost to the fly."

Captain Tilden went forward suddenly wondering why he talked so freely to the cook. It was the child, of course, and the cook's care and interest in it. Every man on board was bound by the one interest.

"It is making us all act as one," was the Captain's thought.

Bates had left plenty of evidence that he was badly knife cut. Most of a bed sheet had been used as bandages. The Captain was down on his knees, back towards the door examining a quantity of blood-stained strips pulled from under the bunk. Jim's voice suddenly sounded behind him, so tense and strong the Captain at first failed to recognize it. He turned quickly to face the boy.

"Captain—come this way quick; the ship's on fire in the cabin!"

As though made of hard rubber and violently agitated within, the Captain bounced. Putting out

the oil lamp, he rushed to the main deck and aft to the cabin, as fast as the total darkness and the motion of the vessel would permit.

Jim was somewhere there ahead of him holding a towel to his mouth.

"There—there—" his voice came chokingly, pointing excitedly to a narrow door not much more than a panel opening into the 'Counter.' It was used only by the oiler to get at the stern post, rudder head, tiller, tiller chains and guides. With oil, grease, and no ventilation, it never was sweet; now a noxious, pungent fume which affected the nose and throat, poured from it, as smoke. Jim had discovered it when the Princess had begun to cough.

Captain Tilden quickly wet a towel, and with it covered his mouth and nose before starting for the panel door in the wooden bulkhead. When he heard the child wail and cough, he suddenly stopped. Indrawing his breath, he took the wet towel from his face and pointing gave it to Jim. In the excitement he had overlooked the fact that opening the panel door made it worse and the child's delicate lungs might not stand it.

The Captain's bulky chest held ample air while he got another wet towel. He saw Jim rush forward with the babe. He thought of opening the doors, but free oxygen might make it worse. He squeezed through the narrow opening.

For a moment, as though face to face with death, he was transfixed, his eyes on the wrought steel rudder post. The heavy forged tiller was fastened to it by mortise and tenon. Immediately over it, with the neck downward, a sixteen ounce bottle was cleverly suspended. Its contents dropped slowly on the steel rudder head.

With each drop a thinnish white vapor with the stifling gas, arose as the metal was dissolved as ice plied with hot water. Soon the rudder would weaken and with the strain of the unusual seas that the ship was now in, it would be useless—the ship lost!

CHAPTER VIII

TILDEN with astonishing deliberation cut down the bottle and worked back through the panel.

All the doors were thrown open and copious oil poured on the rudder where the destructive acid had been dripping.

The cabin was soon free of the fumes as the wind had again become a gale.

With great care the Captain preserved the bottle for daylight examination and was about to resume his search of Bates' room when the fouling weather called him back to the deck.

Daylight the next morning still found him there. His prayer for storms had been promptly answered. Straight on her course she struck the seas mountain high, so that she both rolled and tossed. The galley fires went out repeatedly and everything fluid was taken out of hand.

"Of course we can't swear it was Bates, but we know it was he—" Tilden had left the deck and was sipping the steaming coffee just taken from Jim.

"It has so many aspects—so many questions are—" the cook hesitatingly began.

"I know—I know. As soon as we pass this weather I'm going into it. He had to prepare for this in Mobile—and what for—damn him!—and is this all?"

"When the Princess coughed I was sure fire—"

"Fire or no rudder would be the same now, Jim. Your eyes show no sleep last night either, making soup and coffee for the men."

"Oh, it was not so hard on me—it's the men. I thought they would surely go overboard."

"Yes, it was hard. I worked them constantly;—had to. Shortening sail is always a tough job. The sail she's got now is going to stay unless her seams open. Can you stand it two more days, Jim? If the subs don't punch us, or some other accident happen, we'll be in still water then." The Captain began on his breakfast in the trough before him.

"Oh I can, yes, but how about you? This is your second day without sleep. Can't Sturgis—?"

"Sturgis has done enough; he must sleep; but if she holds steady—"

"If the wind holds steady, why couldn't I stand watch? I could wake you for any changes, or—or—"

"Jim, this is dirty weather. The subs hug the base, or hunt the lee now. Jim, we're making speed, despatch—" the Captain's eyes held a triumphant light. "Since we left the Azores yesterday we have

mostly been 'undersea.' Unhandy in the galley, Jim?" He had guessed that the galley fire, utensils and food had many times seemed possessed of the devil's cunning to exasperate and discourage.

"Jim—Jim—" Hot food, warm cabin and exhaustion were combining against the Captain. A less vigorous mind and sturdy body would have broken before.

"Yes, what is it, Captain?" and Jim came closer.

"Don't let me sleep. I'll rest a bit—there's a good man at the wheel now."

The Captain's eyes were closed. The lids quivered as though malignant forces closed them against his will and at his imminent peril. No one can understand this who has not been under a breaking strain three or four days without sleep. Devils from Hell league with an exhausted body to freeze resolution, unseat prudence, and finally shut the eyes and mind.

Deliriously, he went on:

"She's got to carry cloth until the poles strip, and then more—more goes on, Jim. The storm—storms—our life is in the storms!"

Jim disappeared from his room, then reappeared with the Princess, putting her on the Captain's bed. When the Captain opened his eyes, he saw Jim enveloped in his oilskins, sea hat and boots.

"Jim, if you're going to be my First Mate, you

must have a better fit than that." Up to that moment, he had never thought of making him a Mate. Why he did then, was never clear to him afterwards.

Jim laughed—a short delicate note of a night songster. Though half unconscious, Tilden knew that it was the first audible laugh the cook had given since coming on board.

"Well, Captain, the boots are not so bad, nor the hat; but the coat— Now, Captain, the Princess is on your bed; she'll roll off unless you watch her. I will report the moment you are needed." Jim hesitated at the companionway; he saw the Captain stagger toward his room and the child.

"Don't forget, Captain, I will report any change."

As he had said, the Captain's boots and hat were passable but the oilskin coat fitted him like his jacket would have fitted the Princess. The helmsman saw trouble ahead and wrapped a rope about him.

Jim was used to the violent motion of the vessel, but was quite unprepared for the wind that swept the unprotected poop deck. His first thought was that nothing could resist it. The ship offered her shoulder to the immense waves that swept her. Her jib boom and even the head sails would penetrate them; then as if suddenly suspending resistance as useless, her head would violently toss skyward, so swiftly and so far that Jim thought she would sink

stern first, or would topple backward. Instead she hesitated doubtfully, finally descending, settling more and more on her port beam until her decks became vertical; then with a most discourteous corkscrew motion, the *Durland* would plunge again into a canyon of water. Water by the ton came over the bows and deck load of timber.

The Captain's boots he might wear, Jim decided, but the hat, never—at least not successfully. But the fact that its owner knew so well the power of that wind and wave, and so accurately gauged the resisting power of the weakest part of that combination of inanimate material—hull, sail, cable and chain—aroused his admiration and gave him confidence. He watched the water, fascinated. It ceased to be angry; but only determined. With these conclusions came the exhilaration of the adventurer.

To be certain about both man and child, he slipped below. Captain Tilden was asleep on his side, in shirt and trousers. He had drawn the human mite close to him—so close one could scarcely know it was there. Jim smiled when he saw it so perfectly protected by his long arm in the space between the bulging chest and his raised knee. Though his fatigued body was unconscious and inert, the child beside him seemed to give his soul power over every man on board, as well as the wood, steel, iron, sisal

and cotton of the ship, which was not only resisting the tumultuous sea, but was making record progress towards its port of destination.

Jim left them with the smile still on his lips. His plan had succeeded. He could not talk to the man at the wheel without shouting in his ear. Both were frequently enveloped in heavy spray that came as blinding snow. The awesome grandeur of the stupendous wave and howling wind was enough. Then there was the valiant barquentine which laughed at the thumping, twisting, pitching sea, while putting the tempest to good account. Fascinated and exhilarated, he hated to go below when he recalled that he was still the cook.

The child and man were awake. The Princess was crooning and using the Captain's forefinger to lift herself clear of the bed.

"Well, Mate, how is the weather?" Jim glanced at him and inwardly smiled. Even with so little rest over-seriousness was gone. "Devil take it!—Biscay is a winter corker! A periscope now is about as good as steam heat in hell. Jim, feed the men well and pray Biscay's dirtiest weather will stick with us, and we will be discharged and gone before Bates can make port." He took up his boots and oilskins. "The damned beast!" he muttered, recalling the Mate's last act.

Jim stood bracing himself between the jambs of the door.

"Will he try to follow us?" he asked.

"I think so. His papers and hard luck story will get him by. He can't stay there and he will want to know if his hellish game worked."

"Won't he be afraid?"

"Ah—Bates is a rat. I've just placed him in the animal world while I was asleep. It is hard to get a rat out of a ship for once and all. They are cunning and bold and will take a coward's chance when driven close. They live in filth and yet when they come out of hiding, look sleek. But why—why does he want this bark to sink?" Captain Tilden had drawn on his boots and buttoned the heavy oiled coat. "No one would pay him to sink this kind of a cargo—if we had munitions, yes."

"It is the work of simple depravity whatever he expected to accomplish," said Jim bitterly.

"Nothing else, Jim." Captain Tilden tossed aside his sea hat instead of putting it on, and turned to the curtain behind which the Princess was making herself heard. Emerging with the mite in his arms, he voiced his thought:

"This is the mite who sent you on a hunt, or right now we'd be in the boats—or worse. No, Jim; nothing just happens. This baby was provided to

save us—hey?—you foot-and-a-half sailor—the best hand on the ship!" The Captain raised her high above his head then brought her over to the cook. Kissing her tenderly on either cheek, he laid her gently in his arms.

"Captain, did you finish examining Bates' quarters? Should they be cleaned?"

"No, I haven't, Jim, not more than to be sure he was deserting. You're right, Jim; they should get a good dose of Formaldehyde!" The Captain moved to scrutinize all the instruments, and then went on:

"The mercury indicates—well—this blow may turn into a hurricane. As soon as it's over we'll examine Bates' quarters. I saw a lot of used bandages, and being a rat—you know—" While talking, the Captain had resumed his sea hat and interest in the instruments.—

"Jim, you're right. Both beam and head motion is about the same. N-o-o—" he mused, "this won't last," scanning the barometer; "we will soon be shortening sail if we don't bare the poles." The Captain looked at Jim and then at the child as if expecting both to respond. Instead, as though taking up a cue, a heavy gun fired amidship.

The Captain started to the deck exclaiming:

"How in the name of Heaven could that happen now?"

He was stopped by Sturgis bursting into the cabin.

"The main mizzen sail has carried away—it's been tampered with—it's as rotten as cheese!"

CHAPTER IX

"STURGIS, bend on a spare; we want every knot. Pass the word to the men that there's foul weather ahead. When you're ready, we'll luff just enough to get it home."

Captain Tilden had scarcely finished when "Aye, aye, sir!"—and Sturgis was gone. Again the Captain's eyes met Jim's.

"How can sail and rope be tampered with?" asked the cook, his burning eyes the only evidence of his inward excitement.

The Captain's head dropped forward. Looking up through his shaggy brows in serious thought, he replied slowly:

"I guess the same stuff—the acid he hung over the mortise tiller will destroy anything. Diluted it would act slowly,—but I don't see how Bates had the time—"

Sturgis burst into the cabin again.

"The spare is full of holes and so rotten a breath would carry it away!" he exclaimed.

"The main and mizzen sails are the same size—there's two spares for each; try another."

In his hurry, Sturgis slammed the door shut after

him. Into his chair at the table Tilden sank, glanced at Jim, and then looked intently at the child:

"When we sailed, this ship and gear were right. Fortesque the Surveyor knew it, and I know it!" he muttered. "It's been done since we sailed. Bates could hardly handle this alone—" he paused and then continued: "No, I don't believe Bates unaided could do it—and whoever helped is now aboard. Spanish John is a possibility—Bates talked with him often. What will I do if all the spare sail is ruined?"

The Captain got up and went into his room, looked slowly at the chronometer and barometer, then turned and stood between the two rooms. Again he stared at the infant Jim was holding.

"If our sail spares are useless, we will trust in God and pray this near-by hurricane will strike and keep us moving with bare poles."

Jim looked down, moved slightly and drew a deep breath. Both men turned anxiously toward the companionway door; they heard Sturgis coming back.

"The next one was all right!" he exclaimed when he entered. "We'll soon be ready to luff!"

Captain Tilden followed Sturgis to the deck. Jim took the Princess to her accustomed swinging chair in the galley while he prepared the noonday food. Still aided by the fearsome gale and storm, the *Dur-*

land continued its rapid way. So far through the medium of a little child, she had successfully resisted the plans of Bates or those he might represent.

During the next forty-eight hours, Captain Tilden had a chance to neither rest nor sleep, or scarcely eat. Not even fragmentary thoughts were possible except of their immediate safety.

Every movement proved so perilously exciting that the limit of human endurance seemed frequently reached. The storm drove them generally towards their destination; at times with bare poles, but the moment it eased the least small sail was ordered until she was staggering under full sail again when the fag end of the storm came.

The crew understood that the storm was the lesser of two evils, and they were willingly worked to complete exhaustion, when the Spanish Lighthouse was sighted.

Jim was the wonder of the entire crew. No one but a deep sea sailor can fully understand the difficulties of preparing food for a dozen worn-out and hungry men in a small, narrow kitchen that was at one moment on its side, the next on its end, and never vertical—no practical way of confining fluids or overcoming the shifting gravity of burning coals and kitchen utensils on a stove nearly as antiquated as a plow made of a crooked stick. No major im-

provement had been made in the ship's galley since water was first boiled.

The prepared food would roll from the range and begin a pendulous motion with the roll of the ship from one end of the galley to the other. Potatoes, onions, carrots and boiled beef, with pot and pan containers, if unwatched, would soon carom from one end of the galley to the other in an unsightly mass.

When Captain Tilden picked up the lighthouse at Bilboa, his face did not change expression—he experienced no thrill. He had been looking for it for some time. He moved as one so reduced by fatigue and loss of sleep that for the relief of them, he would have been glad to welcome the oblivion of death.

He did see the admiring and approving glances of the crew who gathered about the forecastle and he vaguely knew by that, that he had done well. He had sailed through Hell and brought his vessel and every stick of timber cargo within sight of the harbor; more, he saw the pilot boat and tug coming out to meet them. Both had been looking for him. He would give just one more order, then the storm-tossed, wind-scourged *Durland* would drop her cloth. Once danger was all passed, everything and everybody safe, he would sleep. Whether awakened in this world or the next was the same to him.

The barquentine was turned over to the pilot as the tug paid out the tow line.

"Sturgis, let the men go below as soon as possible." The Captain glanced aloft at the overworked sheets now flapping idly. Laboriously, as an aged, blind man, he reached his chair. His eyes full of hot sand, were covered by both palms. He ate the soup but rejected the coffee that Jim brought.

"Jim, we are in still water," he mumbled.

"Captain, I should think you would fall—all of four days without sleep—"

"Yes—goin' to stay in bed until I have it out; don't call me for any one.— Where is the Princess?— Before I go to sleep, bring her.— Angels guard her, Jim; I feel them hovering 'round when she is near—wonderful!—nothing more wonderful, Jim—" his voice trailed off into silence.

The Captain's head was again in his palms; glassy eyeballs turned backward as in sleep, but leaden burning lids would not close. His nerves raced like an engine without load.

"I will bring the Princess—go to bed at once." Jim's suggestion sounded more like an order.

Tilden fell heavily on his bed. Jim saw the white only of the half closed eyes, and was frightened when he laid the Princess down beside him. The Captain reached out and took one of her tiny hands in his own and held it to his eyes, then drew it to

his lips; released it, and his big hands passed lightly, tenderly over the tiny face. Soon the burned lids ceased twitching. The great nerve waves that were sweeping through him were being stilled. Soon he slept.

Jim held the screening portières, peered at the man and child, and a smile parted his lips. The babe too was sleeping quietly. He went on deck. Jim found Sturgis in charge and with nothing required of him, he sought his bunk for the sleep that was overpowering him.

The Spanish Pilot made him understand he must have floodtide to cross the bar into the river—a wait of three hours. All hands could sleep.

Sturgis had no intention of letting the men go until the barquentine was ship-shape. This done, he sent them to their quarters, but unbidden, he himself, remained. When they finally came alongside the dock of a one-story cooperage plant on a slimy, oozy tide creek some two miles from the City of Bilboa, he insisted that they be moored five feet therefrom, instead of tied to the dock, and that no gangplank would be laid until so ordered by the Captain.

When Jim awoke and came up, the inert barquentine *Durland* was deserted. The single deck watch was leaning against the main mast, asleep. Jim shook him and sent him below.

As he appeared, five men had hurried along the dock towards where he leaned, still stupid with sleep, on the taffrail. Tall waving marsh grass enveloped them.

"She has gone aground while I slept," was Jim's first thought, but he was soon to know differently.

In very good English one of the five explained, bowing low, that he was of the firm of Hidalgo and Company, to whom the ship was consigned. One was the owner of the plant and two others were "Adwana"—Customs House officials. The fifth man, a clerk, had the Captain's mail. All had sufficient business reasons for wanting to see the Captain at once.

"The Captain is asleep," Jim informed them.

"But would the Mate be so kind, so obliging as to tell the Captain that the officials of the Kingdom of Spain await, and want to see the ship's papers so that entry will be facilitated and the lawful import duty calculated and paid?"

Jim shook his head.

"We have had bad weather. The Captain for four days has not slept. I am sorry, but—"

"But would the Mate please?— Yes, oh, Caramba! we know of the weather—many buildings were blown down—German boats had to come inside Galea Point and were told to go away, but they did not—"

The cherub faced agent with his bronzed pink cheeks, full lipped and sagging jowl, was evidence that fat fowl, good wine and sweetmeats were still obtainable in Spain. With a substantial cane he pointed to a tall thin man who pulled at a gray goatee.—

"That is the owner of the timber. He has been looking for this cargo for nearly a year and has a big force ready to begin unloading," designating with the cane again a group lolling about a timber shed. "The cargo is all settled for—I have the papers." Taking a large envelope from his pocket, he tapped it delicately as a protest against Jim's complacency or disrespect for the King's tax collectors.

Jim was unmoved by the comedy.

"Would the Señor Mate be so kind," continued he of Hidalgo and Company, in a warning ripple, "to tell the Captain that he had extremely important communications from the vessel's owner?" The clerk standing apart holding a huge envelope and package, drew the cane his way.

"The vessel had been engaged to go to Valparaiso, Chile, and it is important—yes, very, very, very—that the Captain should know it at once.— That one end of the warehouse contains her new cargo." As a weather vane, the cane hanging ornamentally on his arm came to "posing" as the voice went on:

"At much expense it has been secretly lightered out that far away from the striking longshoremen."—

"Oh, yes—the Señor Mate should know—wine from the California—much improved by the long sea trip in upland Spanish oak casques that bore the export stamps of Imperial Spain. That the Spanish origin of the casques was further attested by certain Latin hieroglyphics into the wood deeply burned." His voice now rippled on pleadingly.

Jim blinked, but otherwise seemed unmoved.

"We have oil in tins, bottles, kegs and barrels sent to us long ago by the American Cotton Oil Company, wonderfully converted, refined and blended with the corn oil of Del Norte, America, all bearing stencil, stamp and label: 'Castilian Pure Olive Oil.'—

"Also, most wonderful and marvelous Señor Mate, very many cases, even enough to fill a ship of good, yes, very good attested Castile Soap, manufactured in New York. Its Castilian origin and more—the King has collected liberal import and export duty on the soap—was amply proved by applying to each case a red hot steel stencil or branding iron. Would not the kind, good Mate please tell the Captain?"

Jim leaned heavily backward, his right hand resting on the taffrail; crossed his legs, and expelled

a deep breath. He looked at the booms holding the *Durland* technically in the stream; then slowly, determinedly shook his head.

The tall goateed owner's disgust banished polite hypocrisy. Prudently, the Customs House officers and clerk restrained their impatience. The United States Navy uniform which Jim wore, might mean much. New things were coming from all ports of the world.

"The Señor Mate can do nothing?" Hidalgo's man elevated his brows and simulated sweetness, though it was evident he would rather wring the Mate's neck.

"We are a week ahead of time—" then Jim added in defense of the Captain: "For four days no one has slept."

To the eaves of the rickety shed warehouse, Hidalgo's Romeo and party retired. Jim thought their gestures indicated soft, discreet cursing. The officers of the port finally disappeared. The rubicund face and the one with a chin like a Billy Goat conferred and decided upon diplomacy, evidently planning.

Jim vaguely wondered. The waving marsh grass was painfully suggestive and depressing.

Soon a small boat came from under the dock, some distance beyond the *Durland's* head, and worked back to them. Still stupid from loss of

sleep, Jim remained on the starboard taffrail. Hidalgo and Company's man of affairs—the second scene of Act One—began by resuming his place on the dock, as his boat bearing a substantial good-will offering calculated to overcome scruple and simulate energy, rested alongside.

"Señor Mate," began the diplomatic emissary, drawing back his elbows and inserting the cane athwart the small of his back, bulging his chest forward, "we know that you have had a very hard time. The hurricane was terrible—besides—the enemy. Wonderful—wonderful that you are here so much ahead of time." In melting voice which almost threatened tears, he went on determinedly: "We are sending you a few little things in appreciation. The case of wine is for the Captain; the fruit and fresh milk for the cabin table, while the cigars and cigarettes are for you—the brave Mate's own use—please accept them. Take the wine, fruit and milk to the great Captain, with the compliments of Hidalgo and Company, and tell him I shall await his pleasure."

The boatman timing his movements with the speech, skillfully lifted a wicker basket aloft within Jim's reach. He also handed Jim a quantity of assorted fruit, an earthen jug of milk, a box of cigars and a paper bundle of cigarettes which he

placed beside the companionway, then resumed his place on the taffrail.

"The Captain will thank you when he awakes." The emissary with arms akimbo behind with his cane, was getting discouraged.

"The Señor Mate cannot tell him now?" he asked wistfully, though both his plump hands itched to choke Jim. "Has the brave Mate of the great ship that will take our wine, olives and soap to America del Sur, through Canal de Panama, any other pleasure?—If so, I am here to do it."

Jim lacked energy to explain he was not the Mate.

"When the Mate comes ashore I will see—I will personally see at the expense of Hidalgo and Company, that nothing is wanting. With such hair and such delicate ears, soft sea complexion—and I would say—ah—such ruddy lips—the Mate would be very popular. Ah, I see he is also modest—he blushes!"

It was true Jim had blushed. He turned gladly when he heard Sturgis approaching to relieve him.

When Sturgis came aft over the deckload, his blue eye as soon as it beheld the wine, fruit and milk, danced and cavorted.

Before Jim departed, he assured Hidalgo's man that the moment the Captain awoke, he would tell him of their requests, but he hoped that the man would continue begging Sturgis and

get cursed or thrown into the dirty tide creek.

"Señor Mate—" the cane came down and he advanced slightly—"all we want is to begin unloading. As I have already pointed out, we have many men waiting who will work night and day to get the timber out, and then fill the ship quickly."

Jim stopped in a doubtful attitude; only his head was visible.

"I will see," was all he said.

He opened the cabin door carefully and softly worked around to where he could see between the curtains. Captain Tilden was resting on his side, his face towards Jim, but inclined downward until nothing but a mass of tangled gray hair was visible. The little Princess lay close to him, wide awake, looking about—perhaps wondering how any man could have such lung and heart capacity, and such long arms.

To Jim he appeared the stump-cut log, bark and all, of an aged oak tree that had for centuries resisted everything but man. Noiselessly he went out galleywards, diluted and warmed some canned milk, put it into a tapering salad dressing bottle equipped with a rag teat of his own fabrication.

With but slight variation, the Princess took food every three hours.

Returning to the cabin, behind the curtains he tiptoed. While waiting for the tiny hands to get a

firm hold on the bottle, he was startled when the Captain, in a dazed undertone, without moving or opening his eyes, asked:

"Jim, is that you?"

"Just giving the child milk, Captain."

"You are not going to—take—her away?"

"No, Captain, she will remain quiet if she doesn't get hungry."

"Leave her, Jim; my eyes are covered with burning sand. She softens the pain.— We are alongside?"

"Yes, sir."

"Jim, have you slept enough?"

"Oh, yes—I got some sleep every day."

"The Dons want the cargo?"

"Yes, they—"

"Tier it alongside—but not a stick leaves the dock till the manifest checks. You're Mate now, Jim; tally every stick as it goes over side.— Every muscle cries out, Jim; if sinking, I could not move." Here the Captain's voice lessened as if he were being swiftly carried off.

"Yes," thought Jim as he went out, "the man whose physical endurance seemed to have no limit, has succumbed, and his soul has been borne away—led by a little child—who shall say where?—for it is known that sleep's least function is to rest the body."

CHAPTER X

It developed that Jim had a faculty for getting things done so quickly and quietly his authority was scarcely felt. Sturgis ran the donkey engine while they were unloading. Spanish John cooked, leaving Jim to tally and take care of the Captain.

Captain Tilden could be aroused now and then sufficiently to take a drink of milk, after which he would draw the Princess to him and again sink into a coma. His great chest would fill so slowly that Jim had to look closely to be sure of respiration. Though he shook him and called him, he got no response for long intervals. When the Captain finally came out of his torpor the ship was clear of cargo, the hold swept clean and the decks washed down.

The timber was ranged in tiers well back from the ship and the casques, barrels and cases were moved immediately alongside, ready for loading as soon as the Captain gave the word.

Hidalgo and Company's rubicund man of affairs was in a constant state of nervous haste. Their wine and oil had lain there more than a year and no

ships were available. This was their first and perhaps their last chance for a long time.

The approaching crisis in the great war augured badly for Spain's export business and there was also ominous trouble and riots among their laboring classes.

It took time for Jim to understand the Spaniards' extravagant compliments while the unloading was being rushed.

While the Captain examined his mail, the advice from the manager-owner, and the order was to load for Valparaiso, Chile, the gentleman fandangoed on three legs—his two natural ones and the one he could hang on his arm. The Spaniard also prepared feasts and entertainment for the crew —anything to keep them from Bilboa, as some would be sure to desert, and what was worse, get into trouble with the striking longshoremen.

A cook was smuggled out of the city with the fresh water. Captain Tilden insisted, and Jim's name went down as First Mate on the new articles, and according to custom, he took his place at the table in the cabin.

It was Jim's first breakfast there opposite the Captain while the Princess was within reach in her combination chair and hammock.

"How much coal have we now?"

"Not very much, Captain. We had to force

the boiler unloading and loading, you know."

"Do you know I have not had time to overhaul Bates' quarters yet? If he had not used that space, we would not need coal."

"Can't we get coal in Valparaiso?"

"No coal there—in fact, none on the whole west coast. I'll insist on the Dons filling us up before we leave. They'll do anything to get us cleared. My prophecy about Bates turning up has failed?"

"I—I—well, I don't want to see him—but there is time yet."

"Don't let him worry you, Jim; he's not worth it."

"Captain, I learned—that is, Spanish John insists that Bates told him that this barquentine is hoodoo."

"Boy, is he cracked?—criminally loony?—or was he hired to send her down? Ships are sometimes sunk to get the insurance, you know. No, Mr. Simmons owns three-quarters, and I know—I feel he's straight."

"Who owns the other quarter?" Jim asked meditatively.

"Some member of his family, I inferred. No, Jim; I have thought all around and over and all through that damned crazy fool's attempt. I have decided that it was not the ship, but someone in the ship he was after."

Jim colored—then as suddenly paled. They were interrupted by the Spanish Agent.

This enterprising man had kept a tug and lighter busy. He brought extra gear to replace those lost; general supplies, water, pigs, fowl and a goat—a real wet nurse for the Princess Ann, as no canned milk was available in that part of Spain. But pain came to his face, his plump grease-fed hands were wrung, when Captain Tilden referred to coal the third time.

"My dear, brave Captain, who brought the great ship through the hurricane with a deckload of timber, and must go back the same path—coal in Spain is now impossible—Caramba—impossible! I would walk on the water to the city a dozen times to get it for you—you who must take the great ship, carrying our wine and oil, through the Bay of Biscay in the stormy December winter season and escape the German submarine—you, Señor Captain of my heart, I cannot get you a single pound of coal. France gets coal. Italy gets coal. England gets coal—but every fire in Spain is either wood or charcoal—terrible—terrible!"

Captain Tilden was unable to hear the extravagant speech without a smile, even though he wanted to curse him.

"Well, I guess that oil you put aboard will burn."

"Great—fine! I knew the great Captain, with

strong body as big as the standing boiler for unloading his ship, would find a way. The oil is insured, and if the perils of the sea require him to throw it overboard or burn it—it is the same. They will pay—not so soon, but some time."

By mid-day, the *Durland* was ready for sea. The tug had taken Captain Tilden to the city to clear the port. Sturgis had turned in to get a few winks. To cross the Bay of Biscay any time in winter is an adventure, but now the submarine was an added danger. It meant but little sleep for all hands on board.

Jim had some of the crew making the final clean-up, and they were washing down the deck when he saw Bates coming. His heart jumped. He was at once both relieved and apprehensive. That Bates was able to swagger, able bodied, towards the ship, was living proof that the weapon he had driven, had taken no toll.

He moved, leisurely aggressive, forward into the waist as Bates headed that way.

"Hello, cook; I see you landed and are partly unloaded."

Jim still wore the Navy blouse and trousers, but was without head covering. He was on the deck opposite and somewhat above the quondam Mate.

Jim nodded, vizualizing anew the monster in the man.

When Bates raised his head to grip the gasket to swing on the rail, Jim's palm went up.

"No one allowed aboard, Bates."

"I guess the Mate is allowed aboard."

"No one but the Captain can let you aboard—he is not here," the while meeting Bates' shifting eye.

"Look here, cook, this is my ship. I'm the Mate, and I'm coming aboard."

"You cannot come aboard now." Jim moved slightly toward the rail.

"Well, if this don't beat me for gall! The cook tells the Mate of the ship he can't come aboard—"

"Bates, do you want more trouble—with me?"

Bates winced before he let loose a volume of wind.

"Trouble!" he shouted, slightly crouching, and shaking his fist across—"You damned little shrimp, I'm going to make *you* trouble. You're goin' to find out what it means to stick the Mate of a vessel on the high seas. You're goin' to find out what the inside of a Spanish prison is like—do you hear?" he bawled.

Jim paled. The men washing the deck stopped work.

"Bates, all I will tell you now is that you can't come aboard, and more than that, you must leave the ship's side."

"You feel awful strong, don't you, cook?" Bates

was quick to see the men were against him. He backed up livid with fear and anger. "I dare you to come off the ship!" as a coward dog he barked.

Even as Jim glanced over the ship, he sprang to the rail, thence to the dock, and promptly, easily, walked over to Bates.

It may have been the baggy, flapping trousers that made his feet seem so small. The Navy blouse somehow suggested litheness and confidence. Bates recalled the furious whirlwind attack and suddenly decided to back water.

"See here, cook, I don't want any more trouble with you—"

"You threatened as a bully, and here I am. Now is your time, or hold your dirty tongue!"

"I say I don't want trouble," Bates whined, becoming whitish gray. "I'm not such a bad fellow as you think. All I want now is to get to my room to get some tobacco I left there—then I'll wait for the Captain. I've had a hard time getting here—after being left as I was at the Azores."

Jim again regretted that the hole he wanted to go back to, had not been overhauled and the contents thrown overboard.

"Bates, I see you have lied so often about it that you now believe you were left at the Azores and did not desert. Bates, you are just fooling yourself. Wait and tell Captain Tilden—"

"Yes, I suppose you are still taking care of his bastard kid he sneaked aboard at Mobile. You're an easy mark—you're only his fool. You listen to me and I'll tell you something that'll open your eyes."

"Bates, I would not believe you if you swore to it, and I would not trust you with a shoestring. You know I am not afraid, yet I know you—hands and all." His vulgar reference to the child did cut, though. He did not look at Bates as he added: "You know we are guarded. I will call the officer if you attempt to come nearer the ship."

"Wait a minute, cook. You don't understand. I'm going to stay with the ship and we've got to get along. There's worse than me," he began, plausibly penitent and pleading cleverly, convincingly. "Just as soon as we understand—you didn't hurt me much—I'm goin' to forget that. I got hot and you got hot. The way the old man smuggled the brat aboard, I jest couldn't stand it. I hate brats and then you let him make a monkey out of you, or he'd have shored it at Key West."

Jim had stopped with one foot on the rail. He looked across the ship at the broad, salt marsh that moved in weary waves. Beyond, it merged into a lighter green of stunted trees and finally into full timber, as low lands abruptly mounted heavenward. He felt himself softening.—How far was Bates

responsible for his acts—could he raise himself out of the mire he was living in?

Bates' second reference to the infant saddened and weakened Jim. It seemed that the Captain did know about the child. Strangely he finally found strength by considering what loyalty to the Captain of the ship demanded. Bates, misled by the silence, indiscreetly moved towards him. Immediately Jim's impulse to help him fled and reason reasserted itself. Coldly he looked him through and through.

"Bates, one who lies to me will lie about me. Because you cannot help being dirty doesn't help it. You will never come in a vessel with me again!"

Jim then sprang lightly back to the rail and went to his room. He took the infant in his arms fondling it and kissing it. He put it on his bed instead of back in its swing crib, and lay down beside it, drawing its tiny face close to his closed eyes. Necessity had required him to come in contact with filth; the child would purge and raise his soul. Led by a little child he went sweetly, delightfully to sleep. Voices brought him slowly back. After passing the semi-conscious stage of awakening from sound sleep he heard distinctly Captain Tilden evidently at his desk, talking to Bates. The Captain was speaking in a full tone and Jim could catch even the inflections of his voice as there was only a wood partition intervening.

"No, Bates, it's no use talking; I wouldn't sail with you again without your hands and feet being in irons—do you get me?"

Jim could hear Bates pleading truculently, but so plausibly and convincingly that he again began to feel like finding excuses for him. At the same time he knew it was the Captain's duty to remain firm; that he would, he sincerely hoped.

Tilden did not interrupt but waited until the fellow had finished, when he began as the north wind:

"Bates, you insult my intelligence, insult my loyal crew by asking to come back. I resent an insult at any time; I resent it to my crew. I signed you only for the voyage across as a make-shift. You then had me about convinced—we hadn't dropped the lights of Mobile until I knew you were afraid of the water—that it had you whipped. A rough sea made you shiver like a chilly dog. You are so yellow that you are foolish. Your long suit is rowing with the Captain and cooks. I knew all that before I left Mobile. What has kept you in the ship, I don't know. You are out and will stay out as long as I stay in!"

"But, Captain—" broke in Bates.

"Bates, I listened to all you had to say for yourself. Keep still until I am through. You were strong enough to drive away five captains. I took this ship to make good. I have made good. I

shall continue to make good though I must tear you limb from limb and heave the pieces of your carcass overboard. I know about all that's happened on this ship since I came aboard. To leave the ship at the Islands fitted in with your cursed plans.—

"Bates, some one will kill you—you ought to be killed! You are the kind to cause a man to do murder—to cause me to take your life to save others. That's how you stand with me, Bates!"

The Captain's fierceness was so well concealed that it was a veritable man trip. If given sufficient provocation, the Captain's long arms might prove great saw-toothed jaws of steel that could close, crushing one's bones and doing one to death. Listening, Jim knew it. Bates also knew it and trembled.

"I—I guess you've got me wrong—you've got me wrong. Somebody's been carrying lies. I—I don't think you understand—the trouble with the cook—"

Jim's thought of the possible good in Bates and his handicap vanished again. He strained for what he would say now if the Captain permitted more talk.

"All right, what's your version of a fight with the cook?—Any school boy would have known better. We were running the crucial end of the most dangerous and hazardous voyage ever undertaken with a

deck laden wooden sailing ship—when the last jot of man power on board was required to reach this port, ship, cargo and souls all safe."

Jim trembled. He left the child's side; another knife he used in the galley, he took from the drawer beside him—it was there to protect the babe. Standing by the door where he could better hear if Bates lied, he struggled with himself futilely. He knew this time he would plunge the knife blade deep. Defamation is a terrible thing—an emanation of Satan. He was afraid that the loud thumping of his heart might warn Bates. Surging blood beat on his ear drums, temples, and eye sockets as an exploding fire within. His grip on the knife tightened.

On barbs of his own making, Bates was impaled and slowly writhed. Rampant malice, revenge and hatred were held in leash by fear only. If aroused, volcano-like, the bear-like body of Captain Tilden might envelop and destroy—obliterate him then and there. Bates' upper lip stretched back and upward with the chagrin of one caught red handed. He cunningly struggled for a reply that would not irritate.

"I—I—well, I guess I was wrong not to tell you at the time, but then we were not getting along. When I found out something about the cook—the way he took care of the brat was just like as if he

was its father or mother. He has funny ways. I knew it was his own—that he smuggled it aboard in the basket with the groceries—it made me mad, but I never really intended to put it over the side —I—"

"Bates, your story doesn't hold water," interrupted the Captain.

Jim loosened his grip on the knife. The engulfing passion had eased with Bates' failure to be explicit. He was about to put the weapon away when Bates went on:

"I—maybe so, but he was so offish, and spent more of his time with the crew and the young 'un —I—"

"Bates, you're lying like a dog. Quarreling with the cook, and lying, with you is a disease. If you were just half a man—half a Mate—you would admit the brutality of putting the child ashore, besides sacrificing precious time and destroying the crew's morale. As it was, their fingernails went without a whimper. I don't know whose child it is, or who put it aboard, and I think Jim knows no more about it than I do. I don't care if the Devil's its sire, or even if it's yours, Bates—Jim took care of it and thereby held the best crew I ever had. The child at least once, saved the ship—for that alone, it will have every good thing I can give." Here the Captain looked at the large, carefully wrapped box beside

his chair. Turning again to his desk, he finished writing, folded the paper, went to the door and beckoned to a sailor.

"Take this letter to the officer," he said, pointing towards the cooperage plant.

"When will you be discharged, Captain?" Bates casually asked.

"I am discharged. My outbound cargo is in the hold," Captain Tilden replied, turning to him.

"She isn't quite deep enough for her canvas, is she?—Where are you bound?"

"Bates, I don't know where I'm bound—perhaps to the bottom of the Biscay—but I do know for where I'm cleared. Bates, your hands drip—why would I tell you anything?"

Bates flinched as a thieving dog.

"Captain, I'm stuck. I've got to get out of here on this ship." Bates stopped to listen to the sound of a tug blowing for a tow line; the sound seemed to disturb him. "I suppose I've got to tell you something else—"

"Bates," quickly interrupted Captain Tilden, "don't tell me anything—I will not hear—"

"But I have the papers to prove—" Bates stopped and fumbled in his inside coat pocket.

"Don't try anything more; I will neither look nor listen."

"I think you ought to look at these—" He was

halted by Jim, red eyed and nervous, coming from his room. Bates' face clouded to a scowl.

"Captain Tilden," began Jim, "the tug that will take us to sea has called for the line, but before we leave the dock, can't you decide? It's either Bates, or—"

Tilden stopped him by raising his hand.

"Just a moment, Jim." Then he turned to Bates.

"Bates, you're one-half ass and one-half fox. Papers are man made—any you might have would be as cunningly crooked as you can be." His voice was without heat.

Bates looked baffled, but he made one more request:

"I don't suppose you will object to my going to my old quarters to get some things I left?"

"I do object, unless you are blindfolded and ironed at both ends. Even at that, I must be looking at you. I trusted you once—I got the steel. Once is enough!"

"It might pay you—" Here the tug that was to tow them out shrieked impatiently. Tilden afterwards wondered how Bates had intended to finish his remark.

Jim hurried out on deck. The Police Officer passed him, coming in response to the Captain's note. He arrested Bates and hurried him off the ship.

Captain Tilden then went on deck. The *Durland's* mooring lines were all in. The plump man from Hidalgo and Company rushed up and shook hands with the Captain for the fifth and final time, winked and slightly elevated one shoulder towards Bates and the policeman.

"Keep him incomunicado for two or three days—after that, let him go—we'll either be through the zone or at the bottom," Tilden instructed, and the ship edged away.

"Oh, Amigo Captain, his Majesty's courts are very just—very sure and slow to act—slow and just, dear Captain. If there is no evidence, he will some time be discharged." At this a cheering smile lit on his pink face and stayed.

Under cover of darkness that night, the *Durland* left a hiding-place in the river near the mouth, crossed the bar when the tide came to flood, and with great caution passed out through Bilboa Bay, as close to Point Lacero as water would permit; then in a piping wind, dashed into the Bay of Biscay straight west, the shortest way through the infested zone.

Before daylight the next morning, Captain Tilden had coaxed, driven and flogged the wooden barquentine a hundred and fifty miles away from the Coast of Spain. Only fifty or a hundred miles more and he would be fairly safe from all but the

usual December dangers of the Bay of Biscay.

All in their favor were the heavy clouds hanging low, and there were other signs of bad weather.

Tilden had been up all night. Calling Sturgis, he went below. Scrutiny of the instruments brought a rather anxious look, but he sat down to breakfast fairly well satisfied with the bark's night performance. Soon he asked Jim, who was sitting opposite him at the table, as usual:

"Is the Princess asleep?"

"Yes, she breakfasted early and went to bed."

"Jim, I forgot to tell you that I asked Hidalgo's fat man to get some things for her—I left it to him; he's got children of his own. The box is in there." He jerked his thumb towards his desk. When Jim smiled ever so little, he scanned him closely.

Though Jim was hollow-eyed and fatigued from duty all night, his interest in the infant was instantly aroused. The Captain, though, saw him hesitate, a slight smile about his mouth.

"I might have told you—you know the men went up to the city after getting their bonus. Once a little tipsy all they thought of was buying something for Princess Ann. Something made them lose all sense of proportion and they brought aboard enough clothing and toys to fill our room—much of it won't fit her for five years."

The Captain laughed.

"Wonderfully simple too; the little youngster keeps them from thinking about themselves. I had to punish them last night, but they seemed to understand. As soon as we are clear of the zone, I will make it easier. Jim, I wish this day were over. Do you know, of all that Bates mouthed, only one thing stuck; when he said it would 'pay' me to let him go to his old quarters. I think he meant that."

"He came while you were away," explained Jim. "First he tried to bully me into letting him go below to his room; then he coaxed and do you know, at one time I was almost convinced, and about to give in. But I feel he is exceedingly dangerous and possessed of evil."

"He—the Devil take him!—for reasons we will some time learn, wanted us to sink when he fixed that rudder!" exclaimed the Captain.

"But he can't want that now, if he wanted to sail with us."

"That's just it; I feel that way too and that is just what bothers me."

"You have done what you thought best."

"Jim, I know that what was done yesterday we cannot undo to-day; or what we failed or refused to do, we cannot do to-day. Whatever he wanted in his quarters goes overboard with everything else in the evil smelling hole. Just now worry will not help us."—And with a quick change of tone,

he exclaimed: "Let's see what the fat man got for the real Master of the ship!"

Hidalgo's handyman knew just what an infant en voyage needed. Each item was appropriate and of the finest quality. Jim's eyes moistened when he saw the tiny garments. Gently, daintily, as though hallowed, he caught them up.

"I thought it might be a long time before we had another chance, so I had him get enough." Here the Captain stopped and listened. "The gale is stiffening—it's getting pretty lumpy."

Jim stood apart, viewing the table critically. They heard the child cough delicately.

"Captain, you've got so many clothes for her, she'll outgrow most of them."

"It's a long way to Valparaiso—one can never tell what will happen to a sailing vessel," Tilden responded somewhat gloomily.

"That's so; you ought to know—"

Jim stopped. He saw the Captain's face suddenly cloud. He heard Sturgis run across the deck above them, then rush down the companionway into the cabin. He was so excited that though his lips moved, they did not utter sound. Finally he shouted: "The ship's on fire—forward—in the coal bin!"

CHAPTER XI

INSTANTLY Captain Tilden opened the cabin door leading to the main deck and rushed through it—Sturgis after him.

"Are you sure of the boats?" was his first question.

"Aye, aye, sir, ever since we left the harbor," replied Sturgis.

From where the Captain stood smoke was visible through seams of the deck. As though pressure forced, thin, blue-black filmy streams came up between the planks and about the hatchway. Scarcely did they rise and take form when the north wind dissipated and dissolved them in thin air. The Captain strode towards the spot where the smoke was issuing. His short, stout legs carried his body irresistibly. To the men now gathering about the forecastle companionway, he seemed capable even of stopping the strong winds, heavy seas and spray from the north which struck them full abeam. They showed no excitement, confident in his power to control.

"All hands and dunnage above," he ordered.

Driven from their quarters, they pinched their

nostrils, stuffed cloths in their mouths and went below. When they returned coughing, choking, the Captain had not moved, although the ship had rolled heavily. In the trough of the sea, none too low with cargo and loaded with sail, the gale on her quarter often carried her well on her beam.

The Captain stood facing the port side where the coal was stored—waiting: waiting—for what? Bates had wanted to go to his den next to the coal bin—for what? Had he wanted to remove something, or make the fire more certain?—These thoughts were flying through the Captain's brain.

The smoke grew to a great volume. The coal bin with only a wooden hull between it and the sea, was a seething furnace. The crew was mute beside the starboard rail near him with some of their dunnage about them, awaiting some order—any order. If the sea claimed them, it must be while in action.

Captain Tilden turned. His head was attached to his neck as an eagle's, with ball and socket. Now, for the first time since coming on deck, it moved. On the poop was Jim with the swaddled child. Towards the babe, or Jim, or both, he turned. Sturgis with the helmsman too, strained ear and eye. The Captain's eyes remained fixed for a moment, then he brought them back to the fire as though he had been awaiting something.

The deck's seams near the rail began to open.

Captain Tilden never moved except to answer to the roll of the vessel. When the beam's end went down, he wished it would stay there. Into the crucible that tests men, he was again being dashed.

As angry seas thudded on the ship, solid water was dashed over him to remind or emphasize that in his hand the lives of more than a dozen had been placed. The water that struck him now ran across to the heated deck, turned into a volume of steam and added to the great spreading volume of smoke that would reveal their position.

Some of the crew moved slightly to protect themselves from the water, the while scarcely taking their eyes from their motionless Captain. Some of them moved a trifle nearer the boat swinging in davits on the weather side. They knew it could not be lowered there. As soon as it touched, it would fill. The vessel must be brought about to make a lee, or the life boat was but a trap.

"Why did not the Captain bring her about before it was too late?—But no one spoke their thoughts.

The Captain steadily looked at the deck. The increasing smoke and heat indicated that flame would soon break through. He was stonily indifferent to the universal question in the air, and no one was bold enough to venture a suggestion other

than to move nearer the provisioned boat; some strange power made it impossible.

Jim and Sturgis on the poop far from him, wondered if he heard the Princess cry. Though abundantly wrapped, she was not used to the cutting, wintry wind.

The Captain's eyes again turned towards the spot where Jim stood holding the child. He saw the lad take the babe closer into his arms and peer fondly into its face as he tried to protect her from the cold wind with his body. His eyes moved from them without making a sound, though he saw Sturgis by, with the wheelman ready for instant action should an order come. His gaze fastened again on a spot about five feet from the port bulwarks. Directly over the coal bin his eyes became riveted. Spray carried over to it instantly became white steam.

The goat—the Princess' wet nurse—bleated in fright. Chickens and pigs, by their noise, evidenced their terror. What would save them if the ship's side were burning away as was the deck? The crew stared at the maddeningly motionless Captain.

"There it comes!" they exclaimed, huddling over to the starboad rail. The fire had broken through the deck. White, fierce flames licked through the opening. Larger and larger it grew. The oaken

planks charred and twisted their protest. The flame reached through so far that the foresail was endangered. The Captain still stood gazing fixedly, as a blacksmith stands watching the steel slowly grow to a whitish welding heat, and then when such exact point is reached, his dexterity and rapidity of action is astonishing. It was the same with Captain Tilden when he decided his "iron" was ready.

The oxygen-bearing air rushed affinitively to the conflagration. The roaring furnace in the coal bin sent up fierce flames that reached high for sail and gear, the while eating the oaken deck. The crew even on the windward distinctly felt the hellish heat.

As an eagle bent on the safety of her brood, again the Captain's eye turned aft. Jim stood bent forward almost double scarcely able to resist the gale from which he shielded the babe. Sturgis on the wheel opposite the helmsman, ready for the order, strained sight and hearing.

Finally Tilden's hogshead chest slowly filled. His eyes came back to the hole in the deck now big enough to insert a barrel. He yet waited; then his mouth assumed a funnel shape and ejected three bits of high explosive that detonated when they struck eager ears at the wheel:

"Starboard!" An instant's pause—then the other two followed as gunshots into every ear: "Hard over!"

Instantly, both men with all their strength and weight plied the wheel. The barquentine instantly lowered; her head into the gale's teeth straightway turned. Of the fire malignantly eating towards her heart she was yet unmindful.

Captain Tilden signalled to Jim to come to him. The fast chilling babe in his arms caused the lad to hesitate. Divining this, the Captain shook his head and made him understand. As he came with the child towards the Captain, Jim's feet barely touched the drenched deck. The ship was full in stays, her head sails shook violently; the main and mizzen sheet shivered and slapped viciously, and as soon as released of strain, came amidship with their noisily dragging booms. A veritable bedlam is a ship thrown into stays.

"Steady there!" the Captain shouted to the men at the wheel who were now nearly suffocated with the gas and smoke that carried directly to them.

The ship now head on, rose high to the heavy seas, only to pitch headlong as they passed.

Holding the child in one arm, the other tight around the foremost gasket, Jim stood behind the Captain. He and the infant were the only souls on board who did not know that the next order

meant either death to all—or delivery. The men needed only a warning look to hold fast. Easily above the gale, in voice steady, sure, unhurried, the Captain shouted:

"Port the helm—hard over!"

Then for the first time since he had seen the treachery that had been done, he took the infant in his arms. He settled it at his chest under his right arm, his left passed around the gasket.

"Hold fast, Jim!" and then his face changed to graven marble, conscious that the monosyllables might be his last.

The ship reasoning like a human, came out of stays, and as a needle goes to the magnetic north, she answered her helm. She preferred suicide to being eaten from within—charred to the water's edge by fire.

The main sails caught the rushing air and their booms carried over. As a rocking chair precipitated backward, the heavy blocks crashed home; the ship went over—over—over—until the fore royal, even the trucks of the foremast were in the lumpy sea, and the deck was vertical.

The sailors, clinging anywhere they could, saw their dunnage go. Sure now that he was drowning the fire, they saw their Captain suspended in the air, one long arm around the gasket and the babe held tightly to his breast. The green sea splashed with

foam was half way up to the vertical deck and held there. Yes, the burning hole the Captain was waiting for, was submerged. Into the liberal opening the sea rushed. Geyser-like, clouds of steam rushed out with the hissing and roar of a demon hell-bent.

The Captain seemed certain of what the ship would do, as he hung his eyes bent on the hole that now drank solid water.

Jim hanging with both hands, knew the ship was prostrated flat on her beam's end . . . Would she ever right herself?—Wasn't she foundering now?

In time interminable to all except Captain Tilden, the specific gravity of the carefully stowed cargo, began a mighty effort. Twice the royals raised slowly out of water to be driven back again as though all the devils in Hell held them down. The ship struggled silently but fiercely. Captain Tilden with the babe at his heart, determinedly willed. It gained—it was righting now slowly; a little more—just a little more and she would answer her rudder.

As she gradually conquered, Sturgis, long skilled in the art of righting a ship, coaxed her over to where the wind would send her scudding across the Atlantic, instead of driving her down to a grave in Biscay.

Once she overcame the gale's unfair leverage,

like a giant bird wheeling for an onward course, the ship's masts came vertical, and tearfully joyful, the whirling foam-sprinkled waters began to leave her stern.

The barquentine *Durland* was again on her course but sadly wounded.

Captain Tilden dropped while the deck was yet slanting, but not before Jim. The infant had been exposed to a winter gale too long. Jim grasped her and lightly, swiftly, ran to the cabin.

The Captain ordered some men to the pumps; some between decks to throw overboard the still smoking cinders and partly burned coals.

CHAPTER XII

The Captain saw the men jump to their work, then went slowly aft to relieve Sturgis, and to his credit it must be said that in his own action he took no pride, but the barquentine *Durland* arose a hundred per cent in his estimation. Under such a strain, the average mast as if made of candy, would have snapped. That the seams had not opened, was all he now wanted to know.

In almost a moment, the Princess, swaddled in bed, was unromantically sucking through a new Spanish rubber teat, warm milk just yielded by the goat. Jim was coddling her to be sure she should not suffer from exposure, while Captain Tilden without hurt or emotion, was scanning the surface of the sea for submarines.

The heavy seas were running with the north wind. The crest of the more venturesome undulations gave off wisps of cutting spray. The sea suggested storm clouds viewed from above, or an expanse of sand or snow, but fantasy formed into quaint shapes, and over which, phantom like, the ship moved westward, knowing every knot added to her safety.

"Most too lumpy for either enemy or friend," the Captain muttered. He saw Sturgis coming.

"The ship's side at the load line is burned so weak that if that side were to weather, she would stove a hole as big as a hatchway, but the seams are all snug," was his report.

"We'll have to keep that side on the lee until you get it patched," the Captain replied.

"It won't take long, sir."

"Did the men lose all their dunnage, Sturgis?"

"No, not all, but they're not grumbling. The men found these hanging on the port gaskets." Sturgis handed him a soaking bundle.

The Captain bent forward and with both hands took it from the old seaman as though it were a delicate, rich gift—for so it was for him. It was a message from the forecastle—from the rough men there who now trusted him through and through.

He laid the tiny garments down carefully as though fragile, and began to pace the deck. His voice resonant and clear to give the life or death command—the big order that both risked and saved the ship and lives—at the sight of the infant's soaked swaddling clothes, failed. The aching lump in his throat passed, but emotion kept his eyes filled.

Jim came up an hour later to say that the galley

had been cleared and that the mid-day meal was now ready. Even then the Captain could only nod and point to the bundle, but later when Sturgis came to relieve him his voice had regained its lustiness.

"Drive her to the limit, Sturgis, until we're through the zone!"

Nothing in the cabin now indicated that the deck had been vertical long enough to break a lot of dishes and carry everything movable in one direction. Even the tablecloth had been gravity carried; his books and papers had fallen to the port side in a scrambled mass and the fixed inkwell had been partly emptied. Jim, however, had already restored everything to its customary place.

"That boy is a genius—must be—to get things in order like this!" exclaimed the Captain as he surveyed the cabin.

At that minute Jim appeared with a hot meal in a long wooden tray, which he deftly anchored though the ship was inclining her deck to forty-five degrees. The child he brought and suspended in her usual place, although the Captain's request was unspoken.

Captain Tilden looked and laughed when the Princess threw her bottle away—then smiled at him. From a deep tin cup he sipped the piping hot soup, content.

As their eyes met after gazing at the child, upon both the Captain and Jim fell the chilling effect of

Bates' scandalous reference to the babe. Though understood, and discredited by both, he, Bates, absent and far away still had power to depress them.

The circular dining table, the Captain's chair and the Mate's chair were all bolted down. Across, the Princess' combination chair and crib swung from the cabin timbers so that her position was nearly the same as if she were seated at the table between them.

The Captain ate his liquid food.

"Jim, have you any theory about the origin of the fire?"

"I know so little about how fires start in a ship."

"This fire was either spontaneous or incendiary—which was it, do you think?" The Captain spoke slowly, looking deliberately at Jim, who wanted time to consider before replying.

The Captain was now sure that Jim looked better and had plumped out, as he observed him closely. His raven hair had the natural gloss of health. He had discarded the Navy uniform though his shirt was still blue flannel buttoned high at the throat. The gaunt, bony look about the rump was mended, perhaps by more roomy suspendered trousers.

"Do you believe a fire would start by itself in this ship?" Jim broke the silence.

"Not unless Bates left something to aid combus-

tion—rags or waste, saturated with linseed oil. Do you think we have a traitor in the crew?"

"No—none in the crew," Jim instantly responded.

"Then it narrows down to Bates. We know that he tried to wreck us by putting the rudder out of commission. Careful preparations had to be made to start this fire, and to make them, one must have murder in his heart."

"Is Bates insane enough to want to destroy the ship?" asked Jim with burning eyes.

"I have thought of it until my head feels cracked. Insane—some of his mental apparatus gone—perhaps; his vicious rascality is too well planned for that. It reaches too far; it calls for our lives; I cannot fathom it. Is he after the ship or me, or you, or the babe?" Then looking intently at Jim, he continued:

"Sometimes I feel it is the child."

Jim's eyes met the Captain's only to fall instantly. He did not respond at once. The ship rolled heavily to port bringing the suspended crib close to him. He looked at the child fondly, then realizing that he might be misunderstood, he began, slowly:

"In his first machinations, the child did not figure, but his mind is so twisted that anything—any one—decent or innocent, he hates. I—I think the trouble over the child furnished just what he wanted—the excuse for deserting at the Azores after planning so

well to make us an easy victim of the submarines or storms. You—your seamanship, your bravery and endurance—you have performed the impossible and beat a game to—murder us all!" Jim stopped.

The Captain drew a long breath and turned slightly. Being human, he could not resist a feeling of elation. Jim had voiced so feelingly the admiration of his heart.

"But what could I have done without a loyal crew—a crew made loyal by you and the child?—How could I, alone, have discovered the dissolving rudder head?— The storm would have finished us in half an hour. Jim, the crew is the feet, legs and arms of a ship. Whoever holds them, holds the ship."

"That I can see, Captain," Jim began, smiling only with his eyes—"but how far will the feet and legs go without a head? The plan to drown us where any disaster could be laid to winter weather or submarines, was defeated by you, the head."

Captain Tilden had finished eating. His elbow came up so that his bronzed fist supported his temple. His upstanding hair framed a calmly exultant face. The boy—he regarded Jim as but a boy—had reasoned so well and had audibly credited him, yet at the same time, tactfully.

"So far he is whipped, but I'm afraid we're not yet through with him." The Captain's teeth came

together so hard that lumps formed at the angle of his jaws. The eagle-like beak flattening slightly at the end gave his face the hard pugnacity of the bulldog.

"Twenty-four hours more of north wind that we've got now and we'll—" He got up resolutely, grasping the back of his chair as if he would strip the bolt heads that fastened it down. He scanned Jim's face.

"Jim, do you still feel sure you want to learn navigation?"

"The sea has been my friend. I have recovered. Yes—I am sure."

"We'll get at it then just as soon as we're out of this zone."

Realizing the danger none of the crew needed urging. Orders were obeyed with a snap and ginger only possible when individual prudence and high morale are shaking hands. Worse weather to make even temporary repairs could not have been imagined, but no one grumbled, for it meant speed and the absence of submarines when the biting north blew a gale. The seas mountain high and the trough a dark canyon, every hand and mind urged the ship along. Speed—speed—the ship's head must swing to the southward before they would be out of danger. Then it was that he, the Master of the ship, took a second and long sleep.

A great man offered a small book on the "Mysteries of Sleep," with the modest suggestion that it might stimulate thought—that we might benefit by trying to learn how and why like the current of the ocean, man is moved by unseen power. Reasonably, sweetly, with some proof, he sets down that sleep is a daily demise and resuscitation therefrom —veritably a miracle that we may be instructed and otherwise benefited in a suitable unknown sphere; something, however,—so he claims—not at all necessary for resting the body.

What was added to or taken from Captain Tilden while he slept this time, was not so evident to him as it was to Jim. With the Princess Ann again beside him, they went joyously wandering in a world where all little children remain most of the time. Afterward, when awake and about his duties, he felt something of that chastening world clinging to him. His self-confidence and sense of humor were fully restored.

It was given to him to show that he should not take himself, or others, too seriously, for the great and final responsibility was God's—not his.

Sturgis had by that time made more permanent repairs. The ship for the first time, became normal.

Jim and the Captain stood watch and watch. Sturgis was on Jim's watch to assist and instruct him.

The Captain also took much time when he might have slept, to teach Jim. He seemed to find more rest and pleasure in so doing than in sleeping.

The boy's mind worked rapidly and was so retentive that repetition was seldom necessary. His teacher and mentor was astonished by the rapidity and accuracy of his mathematical calculations. His body grew strong, supple and springy. He went aloft with the men and proved himself as good a sailor as the best. The indications of malady disappeared. The cracked tremulousness of his voice was succeeded by a timbre like a youth's—thin, but resonant and carried clear and strong in noise and wind.

By acts of consideration and deference, though without purposive or noticeable effort, he awakened the paternal instinct in the Captain.

The crew was to have a special dinner the first Sunday after their deliverance from the hands of their dual enemy. A pig, some poultry, fresh vegetables and sweetmeats were sacrificed to establish a holiday atmosphere.

Jim, who had originally suggested it, was about the galley to see to its preparation. The crew had improvised a table forward on the main deck under an awning and summer skies, instead of lines and weather sheets. With some wine from Spain, the Captain's health was drunk. On watch, he stopped

his measured tread across the deck to indulgently acknowledge it. Immediately thereafter they proposed the health of the Mate, who must come out and smile. Then they called for Princess Ann, nor would a smile and a nod from the poop deck satisfy them—she must be produced in their midst. It was easy to see that the most potent factor on board was the little stowaway—age variously estimated from six to nine months.

The hardships endured were forgotten. To them she was a Princess. Somewhat stimulated with drink, but without misbehavior, they ate their fill. As soon as they were through, in all seriousness they formed two lines between which she must be carried from her position at the head of the table to the cabin where she mounted in her usual place beside the table there.

This was the first time since he had come aboard the *Durland* that Captain Tilden could eat unrestrained either by fear or apprehension. Sturgis took the deck when he went below.

The Princess, acknowledged Queen of the Forecastle, was suspended from the cabin timbers as usual, but now asleep, as he entered the room. The coarse, improvised clothing had been discarded and she wore her finery to-day. Jim came in with the last of the steaming festive meal, arranged it on the table, and then sat down opposite the Captain.

"Jim," the Captain began amiably, "you arrange a table delightfully; this would do credit to an expert housewife."

"I'm glad you're pleased; if one takes a little interest one can do almost anything." Jim did not smile at the compliment—he seldom smiled. He seemed to be guided and controlled by a resolution so grave that he overlooked the shadow effect of the absence of smiles. This shadow kept Tilden silent for a time.

"Jim," the Captain finally began again, "it's not hard for me to see who is the real Master of the ship." The Captain beamed at the child who, kitten-like, had gone asleep grasping the bottle of fresh goat's milk. "I never will understand it; I find most of the crew have no real home ties, and they worship a child.—I believe that she was all that kept more than half of the men from leaving at Bilboa."

Jim stopped eating and looked at the child a moment before replying.

"One thing we are indebted to Bates for is that he aroused the crew's sense of fair play." Then looking squarely at the Captain with the slightest twinkle, he asked: "But whom must we thank for —for the child?"

"Jim, I don't know and I don't care. I am not disposed to look a gift horse in the mouth. When

we get back to a home port it may be our duty to inquire—"

"Captain, I don't see it. What difference does it make who her parents are?— They don't want her, or she wouldn't be here."

"We are not concerned—I feel the same way—but inquiry may be necessary."

"On the other hand, inquiry may start trouble. Do you realize that we—that you have become very much attached to her? That this voyage would be almost unbearable, if not impossible, without her? That she was, and is, a gift of Providence?" Jim's voice was low and tender.

The Captain glanced at the suspended sailormade crib and then up at the skylight beyond, without raising his head.

"Jim, I realize all that and more. For few young men are interested enough in children to make the personal sacrifice that you have done for this one. You must have had some unusual experiences."

"I have had, but I hate discussing anything personal," said Jim, lowering his eyes.

"Isn't it just possible that your reticence misled Bates? I think you should know that he—"

"I know all. Unwillingly eavesdropping I heard everything and like all eavesdroppers, I heard unpleasant things. He told you the child was mine. He had told me a half hour before that it was yours.

All that I know about it is that it's a girl baby, a human being;" then he tenderly added: "that's enough."

"Eh—Jim, Bates is so thorough a rascal he stops at nothing, but his, as all lies do, fall flat soon. I took this ship for a definite purpose. What Bates or any one says or does, shall not defeat that purpose!" the Captain asserted, his jaws snapping together.

"Whatever his purpose, so far Bates has succeeded in making things exceedingly difficult. The storms, his cunning attempts—leaving you without a mate—no other living man but yourself could have overcome the obstacles—"

Here the Princess opened her eyes, squirmed and grunted a request for a sitting posture. Jim raised and fastened her securely.

"Captain," began Jim as he resumed his seat, "for some time I have wanted to tell you something; it's in a way a confession. Until now I'm not sure you would understand. I deceived Mr. Simmons when he engaged me in New Orleans as a cook. I have continued the deception, though I think you have suspected. I never served in the Navy—the use of the uniform was to deceive. Though there is a true hospital story, it is nothing like the one I told Mr. Simmons, but one that makes

the care of this child—any child—an outright comfort."

At this point in the story, the door opened and a steaming hot plum pudding was brought in from the galley. A smile lurked about the Captain's face while he waited for the pudding to cool.

"Jim, I don't care what you told Simmons."

"Well, perhaps I am thinking about myself—about my future. As long as I was the ship's cook it didn't matter, but now—"

Still smiling, the Captain held up his hand:

"Jim, you need not tell me anything unless you feel that the telling of it serves a useful purpose."

"I know just what you mean," said Jim, "and I want to tell you, but at the same time want to warn you that in confessing, I make important reservations. First, do I look as though I had any chronic, contagious disease?"

"Jim, you look wonderfully healthy now. You have mended so much. Your chest has swelled out like a pouter pigeon's; your fingers were like claws or talons; now they are as plump as a woman's; your cheek bones were hectic; your hips hat racks, and your legs would ramrod a squirrel rifle, but now—"

Jim laughed—a laugh that Tilden had not heard before from him.

"For you to know I have completely recovered, is vital." Jim grew serious again. "I have been married; we had a child—the first child—it would be about the same age as this one. My mate suddenly died. The malady was said to be so contagious that I was rushed off into isolation and I became ill. The child—all I had left—was taken from me; oh, it was such a brutal thing—" Jim's voice broke. "I thought I could talk of it— Well, when I came out of the delirium they told me my child was dead, and—and—that I must remain isolated. I was alone in a hut out on a marsh; a darky brought me food and things once a day. I was sure I did not have—"

The Captain ate his food slowly with eyes downcast. The lad's broken narration recalled his own recent suffering. He saw his food indistinctly for a moment. Sturgis' steady pace across the deck was all that broke the dead silence.

Jim continued:

"How I escaped needs not matter now. I was so weak, I staggered. I waded a long way through an alligator infested marsh, at times almost waist deep. I was insane, I think, then. When near the city, I was taken in, nursed and fed by a miracle of Providence. I recovered strength fast. My new found friends gave me a Navy uniform complete even to cap, tie, shoes and stockings. The story-

except for the clothes, was carefully concocted. I told it to the Employment Agency. To Mr. Simmons in New Orleans, I repeated it. This is my confession which I make to partially ease my mind. Like you, I could not before coming aboard, know anything of this babe—Bates, or any one now connected with this ship."

"I can't see that any one is injured—"

"No one;" Jim with vigor went on: "but by means of my story, I got employment at sea, and the child. Why, any child—white, black, brown or yellow, would have been devoured by my starved affection. Captain, I believe that if any one is deceived to their advantage, they are not deceived at all."

"Jim, your logic is sound. Your course is much better than mourning. It has lately come to me that he who persistently mourns for those passed on, is thinking only of himself. This little child, this human mystery, has opened the door. Now I can see plainly enough that grief and mourning after the first pangs of final parting, is Simon pure eighteen-carat selfishness. I—mine—ours—have been deprived of—what? With patient inconsistency or rank hypocrisy, we deck our hats, arms, and bodies with black, the accepted emblem of death, to signalize their advent into what we believe is Paradise."

"I understand you. You ask: 'Why mourn when I know my baby lives—will grow and be taught in celestial surroundings?' The parent deprived of a first child, when matrimony was largely entered into because of the desire for one, will not let reason be the guide. As if lacking confidence in God, they let will power, courage and light leave their hearts and they miserably mourn."

"Time—time, Jim. Our sixth sense is more reliable than all the rest combined, but it receives impressions leisurely and you can't hurry it."

"Like Spanish justice?" Jim smilingly asked.

"Eh, Jim, yes; a case in point without facts to back it. I now believe Bates to be a plausible liar with underground connection with this ship. What it is does not worry me now. How he was going to benefit by wrecking us, is beyond me, however." Tilden was looking apparently at Princess Ann, while leisurely filling his pipe. "It is evident he has done his best, and I repeat that I feel we are not through with him—but let him come. I have twice taken her through the hottest spot on earth. I have reëstablished myself on the sea, and best of all, established a self-confidence that cannot be shaken to the crack of doom. But, Jim—" he stopped and looked at the boy, and then at the babe over the blazing match held to his tobacco— "it would be rank ingratitude if I forgot those who

helped me to do this.— You've had pretty good schooling, haven't you?" The Captain looked at Jim long and consideringly.

"Yes," the other replied, somewhat abruptly.

"I thought so. It is indicated by your readiness in calculations, and use of common sense." He took the child out of the crib and holding it against his heart, turned to the former cook.

"Jim, you'll soon be a real Mate, and this—" glancing at the babe—"is the real Master of the ship!"

CHAPTER XIII

They had fair weather during the whole four weeks that followed, arriving at the entrance to the Panama New Year's Day.

It was not hard for Jim to learn and gradually assume the responsibilities of Mate because Sturgis and every man of the crew was eager and willing to help by doing his part well. At the time they arrived at the Colon end of the canal, he felt at home when in charge. There Captain Tilden went ashore to report to Mr. Simmons that he might get any supplementary instructions at Panama, at the other end of the Canal.

Captain Tilden and Jim, after failing to connect any of the crew with Bates' activities, decided he had played a lone hand. They expected to hear from him again but hardly expected the man to show up as soon as he did.

Jim had noticed the old Norwegian tub *Norman Queen* precede them into the Gatun Locks. From a distance it looked like a dirty, rickety, river boat, bare amidship down to the main deck, with little free board and a two-story dog house cocked up

astern. Articles to go deep sea with her, was nothing less than a suicidal pact. At this time anything could get a charter that floated long enough to take cargo.

Though the *Norman Queen* was released from the docks some two hours ahead of them and was crawling through the Gatun Lake under her power, the *Durland* being well towed, was passing them about a thousand feet to the starboard.

Jim was on the watch. To the naked eye she was but a ferry boat. It was stark madness to have let her rampage clear across the Atlantic. Favorable weather alone had let her succeed. The flag of Norway was painted on her sides. An officer of the *Norman Queen* was looking at them. Jim saw him lower the glasses and walk forward. Something in his nervous slouch reminded him of Bates. At that distance, even with glasses, he could not distinguish features. It was an officer, anyhow, though the only evidence of that was the cap.

"Bates is too big a coward to go to sea in a craft like that," Jim muttered to himself. Perhaps he never would have thought of it again had not the Norwegian vessel been locked with them at Miraflores. The Locks being some thousand feet long, there was plenty of room there for the *Durland* and the Scandinavian boat.

In the first Lock she stopped as soon as she

had crawled in far enough for the gate to close, remaining well astern of the *Durland.*

But when they moved into the second Lock, the trouble started. The officer in charge on the *Norman Queen* might have sleepily delayed giving the order; or the engineer was unable to stop the decrepit power plant with any accuracy. But before she wheezed her last, she had forged so far ahead that she threatened to foul the *Durland.*

As soon as a collision was imminent, Jim called to some sailors who were washing down the deck, to bring a sea mat, but the Norsky Tramp by good luck cleared the *Durland* and finally stopped waist to waist, about six feet away—her main deck considerably below the *Durland's.*

Jim paid no attention; he and Sturgis were busy getting everything ready to clap on sail the moment the tug dropped them outside the breakwater. He was accordingly astonished to hear his name called from the Norwegian craft. He mounted a bit to better see over the rail.

"Hello, Jim; you didn't beat me here much." From under a gold braided cap, the small, narrow spaced eyes of Bates gloated.

"Hello, Bates." Jim put his elbows on the rail to take a close-up of the steamer, then added significantly: "I should say you have been busy."

Bates glanced down at the dirty, scummy, dis-

ordered deck below him, and then back to the painted, washed, scoured, shipshape *Durland*.

"Nothing but luck brought us through. They robbed a graveyard all right, but—" he added quickly, "this flag counts through Biscay, you know." He ended with the question: "Where's the old man?"

"Asleep."

"I'm coming aboard a minute—want to see him." Bates shifted to spring to the *Durland's* rail.

Jim shook his head.

"You can't come aboard, Bates."

"But I've got something for him—at Colon I heard from Simmons. I got to tell him something."

"I'm in charge now; I'll pass any word."

At this, Jim stepped off the bit and moved astern somewhat to avoid the water from the hose the men were using to wash down the deck.

Jim had momentarily forgotten the way Bates was regarded by the *Durland's* crew, and was quite unprepared for their action. He had not seen the glitter that came into their eyes when Bates said he was coming aboard. With the brazen assurance of one who has done murder without yet feeling the halter, Bates jumped. To spring across a six-foot chasm with a rise of two feet, is not easy at any time. Meeting while in mid air an inch and a half stream from a lustily moved deck pump does

not help. Blinded and impeded by the water, Bates failed to reach the rail and fell with a great splash between the two ships.

The pump men were rewarded by hearing Jim's laugh—they had never heard it before. To them it had the ring of silver bells—but it ceased as suddenly as it began.

When Jim leaned over the rail to look, he became alarmed. A navy blue cap with two broad tinsel bands about it, and the coat of arms of Norway in metal fastened in front, was some two feet below the surface with no immediate tendency to rise. Hurriedly he motioned, but the sailors didn't move. Instead, with grin and pump action, they said plainly enough: "Let the fool drown!"

Jim had just been told that some millions of gallons of water were now leaving the Locks every minute. He knew well enough that if Bates were near one of the openings through which it left, the numerous sharks around the Panama breakwater would soon have some indifferent food, and the Norwegian steamer would be short handed.

It flashed on Jim how Bates must feel when being irresistibly sucked down. He was instantly moved to pity. When the deck man of the steamer threw a line and then lowered a ladder, he was glad; but when Bates, while still holding to the ladder, let loose a flood of obscene profanity, his lips

tightened. He wondered if, after all, the sharks were not entitled to something.

They were out of the Locks and headed south under full sail before Captain Tilden came up. Jim, with Sturgis' help, had managed it so that nothing was needed; even the course was pronounced correct.

At dinner that day the Captain seemed confirmed in his reasoning that the conduct of all men, including himself, was at times absurd. He had placed the Princess in her swinging chair, talking to her meanwhile in endearing terms.

Jim told him about Bates.

"Eh—the men did right. Had I seen him, I would have tossed him overboard like a rat or any vermin."

"I thought so. Captain, do you think he is communicating with Mr. Simmons?"

"Maybe—brassy boldness is his disease. It grows on me that Bates is somehow closer to Simmons than I first thought. He appears to have a hold on him—how, I cannot decide. We'd better watch him, Jim. Like a shark, he's ready to show his yellow belly and strike. He's a madman—something suggests a diseased mind blindly impelled by fetish, and therefore, to be constantly watched."

Jim looked with lively concern at the big chest and long arms.

The Captain went on:

"I got mail at Colon. We discharge at Valparaiso and take on nitrate; for where, Simmons did not say—I hope for the States. From this I get a hunch that the vessel's for sale. I get it from other Masters here that sound bottoms filled with nitrate are snapped up by North Sea money; if so, that means we will come home in a steamer to look for another ship."

"Why should you care?"

"The underwriters will know everything, I guess. We saved them twice from loss."

"Then you have nothing to worry about—"

"No, indeed; on the contrary, Jim, we'll be paid —well paid."

The Captain's eyes opened wide, his brows elevated, beaming at the Princess. The child's laugh thrilled both as a stamp of approval from the world of innocence. Jim flushed slightly. Tilden controlled himself and looked straight at Jim. Again his glance was most considerate.

"I don't mind telling you again, Jim, that without you and the inspiration of this little mite, I now believe I would have failed wretchedly. Something to strive for, Jim; and it was she—this bit of soft, helpless flesh who held the crew. Wonderful—wonderful!"

"Yes—but what's going to happen?"

"Eh, Jim, I know what you're thinking. I have considered that too. You love the child, yes—more than I do—don't you see we are tied together by her? I can do it—I can put it through. You must study—work; so you can qualify in the States for a Mate's license. Then—then, do you understand? We've got to have a steamer, and a good one."

"But I may not be able," hesitated Jim, expelling a deep, indrawn breath, and evidently more than a little flurried.

"Don't I know? Even now you know the sextant and can figure position quicker than I can, and didn't I see you lead the sailors aloft as though this was your second time on earth, and the first was spent on sea. Jim, you can do it all."

Jim did not at once want to reply. Instead he asked:

"Have you any idea what Bates wanted?"

"I don't care; something rotten, I'll be bound—Bates is devilish!"

"Bates will be in Valparaiso—he hates me—because—well, he will try to make me trouble—for—" evidently there was something that Jim left unsaid. But apparently the Captain did not notice, for he went on.

"Why fear him now that we know him? How far would his word go against mine and the whole crew? No—no, Jim; have peace—you can tie knots

in his scruff. A snake relies upon being unseen and unheard—when you know they are about, it's easy to scotch them. Again maybe that old ferry boat he's in may fall to pieces before it gets that far." The Captain ended by rising and taking up Princess Ann.

"Yes, indeed," he went on, fondling the child as he stood within the door of his room, "we'll have to be careful of her now. Two weeks of the hottest place on earth, and then south of the equator into continuous midsummer, Jim."

CHAPTER XIV

How amazingly beneficent is the provision that we cannot see what the future holds for us.

Just as soon as the vessel was tied up for discharge in Valparaiso, they were told the *Norman Queen,* consigned to the same firm, had put into Callao, Peru, for repairs.

In discussing it, both Captain Tilden and Jim evidenced relief that this unlovely human monkey wrench would not, just yet, threaten the gearing of the *Durland* which had been running smoothly since they left the Canal, and landed every one well and fairly happy on the west coast of South America—thirty-three degrees south latitude.

What they did not know was that a passenger steamer touching at Callao, was soon due at Valparaiso. Then, too, there was something rather vague, mysterious even about Simmons' instructions which awaited Captain Tilden there. But then scarcely any one could understand how complicated and difficult it was at that time for either cargo or ship to claim insurance.

Captain Tilden, Jim, and of course the Princess were sitting after sundown on the poop deck over

which an awning had been raised to protect them from the semi-tropic sun now approaching the summer solstice, and the sudden, frequent and freakish Niagara-like showers.

"Jim, did you ever see a cargo go out so quick? You'd think there wasn't a piece of soap or a gallon of wine left on this coast. That old lame dog the *Norman Queen,* has the same kind of cargo and they're waiting for her as though they couldn't eat until she shows up." The Captain was in a deck chair smoking. They were facing the flickering lights of the city far above them, the inclined cable railway leading to it, and the ungainly cars, ghost-like, moving up and down.

Captain Tilden's strange, cask-like body was more mysterious when thinly clad. Jim had noticed, when walking with him, that no one ever looked at his shoes or legs, nor his eagle-like beak or his long arms. The tremendous chest and abdomen which had to taper to connect decently with his pelvis, were what brought a second look even from the unobservant.

"I hope we get out of here before the Norwegian arrives." They had been silent some time when Jim spoke. He sat on a stool, leaning against an awning stanchion. The Princess was asleep in a deck chair within easy reach.

"You're thinking of Bates; he won't trouble us any more."

"I'm not so sure. While I have come to think Bates pitiable, he is none the less wicked."

"Well, he'll have to come pretty soon. We've got a little over a thousand tons of nitrate aboard—all she'll carry. My clearance papers are all made out, ready to fill in the date and port of destination."

"Then why don't we sail?"

"That was the order—to rush discharge and load to capacity with nitrate. The agents don't know where to either. I have notified Simmons that I'm ready to sail—quicker than he expected, I guess. Anyhow the delay is up to him. I think I know. I am guessing, you see. This nitrate is ordinarily used for fertilizer—to raise corn and wheat, but now it goes into explosives—to raise Hell!"

"Then we go to the port bidding the highest for this important ingredient of that community?"

"Eh, Jim; you may have guessed right—provided, of course, the underwriters consent. That's the rub—the insurance. I notice all kinds of gentry here—French, Italian, English, and others, and the North Sea crowd who are wet nursing Germany at fancy prices. I hope we get a home port destination.— Jim, isn't it remarkable how the Princess

thrives on goat's milk? She's pink and fat; I can just see her grow!"

"Yes, and the goat moves about with so much dignity—as though it realized its importance."

Early the next morning, Captain Tilden was at the office of the Agents, but the night had brought neither information nor instructions, and owing to the practice of the cable and telegraph company, nothing could now arrive until next day. The Junior, like all good liars, was endowed—he had the face and plausibility to get away with murder. An invitation came from him as though it was only a happy thought:

He was going to Santiago by automobile; would not the Captain go along? He enlarged upon the wonderful scenery en route, and the still more beautiful up-to-date Capital of the Republic, with the astonishing background of the Andes peak, twenty-five thousand feet high, supporting an unpronounceable name. Loquacious, this past master in practice of guile, spoke English fluently, softly, and articulated perfectly. His hands, shoulders and head aided punctuation.— Would Captain Tilden go?

His automobile that even laughed at the Andes, was made in the States—Pennsylvania, to be exact —recommended by a personal friend of Charles Schwab, the steel magnate. It was brought there

in one of the Schwab ships that comes for iron ore. His errand in Santiago, though important, would take but a moment. He would show the Captain how the Trans-Andean Railway defied perpetual snow to pierce the great granite spine, in order to gain the grain fields of the Argentine. He would take him to where the water started east into the Atlantic Ocean, and—but why listen to this Chilian spew, when so much more interesting are the movements of a human being? Especially the one who started for the *Durland* just as soon as unsuspecting Captain Tilden was on his way up the Andes listening to the South American patter. Later, the Captain had to endorse Jim's dictum that "If one is deceived to his advantage, he is not deceived at all."

The visitor to the *Durland* was above medium height, and bony. The big, ill-shaped Panama was too much covering for the spare face. The substantial, crooked cane was really assisting locomotion, going high and coming down again with a resounding bump at every other step; head bent back and up. His brisk, grotesque gait suggested liquor weakness in the knees which required constant pronounced effort to resist.

Two sailors near the forecastle, who had just returned from spending their bonus money, were throwing kisses at the Princess whose throne had

been moved amidship under an awning. They saw the approaching figure, and laughed good-naturedly.

"Too early for a gent like that to splice the main brace," Jim heard, and with heightened interest, he looked at the stranger.

Even the simplest forces in nature are so elusive that the profoundest men of science, in their search, come to a full stop. The greatest forces in affairs human, are so modest and unobtrusive that often their coming and going is unnoticed.

This man Fortesque, who was coming towards him, Jim had never seen, for he had finished surveying the *Durland* before Jim had come aboard. Captain Tilden afterwards was able to recall him by the thoroughness with which he worked, and the cane he still used as a feeler, an antenna, for punching the cargo.

Fortesque was at this time perhaps the most important man in South America because it was he who could say whether ships could go or come. But he was so quiet and retiring that he attracted but little attention. At his hotel he was regarded as a bit eccentric because always alone.

When this most important man came abreast the *Durland's* bow, he halted, holding behind him in both hands his cane as a third leg. He scrutinized the name, the bowsprit, then the cutwater. She was cargoed a little below the usual load line

but perfectly trimmed as a leviathan sea fowl ready for flight.

He moved rather nervously toward Jim. To the businesslike "Good morning, Sir," pronounced with a decided English accent, Jim responded pleasantly.

Then, as if to allow his personality to reform the first impression, he stopped three or four paces from Jim. The cane again became a sort of spinal appendix, but this time, kangaroo-like, he leaned on it and freed his hands. From his lower vest pocket a silver cigarette case was produced. As though driving home a point in an argument, he tapped the cigarette he extracted, on his thumb nail.

"Ah—let me see—you are Mr. Conroy, the Mate of this vessel?" He fumbled for a match.

Jim nodded, surprised to hear the name. He had lived years since he had signed "Jim Conroy" at Mobile. Not an uncommon experience, which proves the state of mind is what counts; not years.

"Mr. Conroy," he stopped to light up, "Mr. Conroy, my name is Fortesque—marine insurance. You see—ah—we are considering the *Durland*. We —yes—we covered her and her cargo the last two voyages from Mobile to Bilboa, and from Bilboa here; in fact, I surveyed her just before she left Mobile."

Jim had absorbed from Captain Tilden the im-

portance—the vital importance—of insurance, and quickly asked:

"What can I do?"

Mr. Fortesque removed his caudal prop and leisurely moved toward the ship, ostensibly for a better view.

"Er—ah—Mr. Conroy—I came—" He did not finish. Catching sight of the Princess, he exclaimed: "My Heavens! How beautiful she is—she has—I say, what a beautiful child!" Whether it was astonishment or delight that moved him, Jim could not tell.

Self-contained, prudent, conservative, Fortesque impulsively crossed the plank and kneeled before the little child. Fortesque did more; uncovering, he bowed. He now looked more angular—older. His nose was big and uneven; his cranium was bare except the considerable lock which stood up in front like the Statue of Liberty, which, with good sense, he had not tried to spread all over the New York Harbor surrounding it.

Jim, who had seen the outwardly impassive Captain do the same thing, as one might before Arbutus blooming in the snow, was not surprised. The little girl child, as she sat, was marvelous there on the white spread.

The words of the Englishman's hypnotic chant he could not distinguish. He saw him finally pass

his free hand over the child's head and back to her soft, chubby neck, letting it come to rest a moment there, as into the babe's eyes now opened wonder-wide, he looked tenderly. Rising, he stepped back, again looked closely, seemingly satisfied and relieved, and with the same jerky, nervous movement, returned to the cook.

"Ah—er—Mr. Conroy, a most amazing child—er—I believe that—she is the stowaway you got at Mobile?"

Jim nodded, hardly concealing his astonishment.

"Mr. Conroy—er—you must not be surprised—I can assure you we do not carry a hundred thousand pounds insurance without some knowledge of the Captain and personnel of the crew. And I don't mind telling you we are pleased with Captain Tilden. He ought to have—he ought to have a better command."

"He is a careful man," Jim quietly asserted, meeting Fortesque's approbative search squarely.

"Mr. Conroy, being careful, alone, doesn't make a sea captain. I know some captains who are so careful they ought to be driving oxen. A real ship master must be big enough to hold the crew, have a comprehensive knowledge of both ship and cargo. He must, every moment, know just what strain his ship will stand. He must have the boldness and guts to put it on her. No other occupation, busi-

ness or profession calls for such talent—merging into genius."

As one giving instruction in advanced seamanship, Fortesque talked. He brought his stick in front, leaning slightly towards the fascinated Jim.

"Now, you take the matter of your fire on board coming this way through Biscay. A royal submarine was pretty close. In that weather they had to submerge, eyes and all, to go to you. When they again looked, you had disappeared. We were sure that the sea was short a dozen good men, and that we had lost half a million. When our sea Intelligence reported you off the West Indies, with everything set, fancy how we felt!"

Fortesque glanced in the direction of Princess Ann, then at the neat patch over the hole burned in the main deck.

"Now the matter of bringing her out of stays as Captain Tilden did—throwing her beam on to drown the fire—exceedingly dangerous that was. In a moment he had to calculate how much strain she would stand. If he had miscalculated, you would not be here listening, and she would not be ready for another port. Just see how she is trimmed. I'll wager she's not out half an inch fore or aft."

As Jim said nothing, Fortesque went on almost immediately.

"Now, what a difference," said he; "another fellow right here in this harbor: too much cable, and his ship swung with the tide onto charted rocks. We have to pay for her and the sea loses a good ship."

Jim was tremendously impressed by this man of affairs. However, even though he listened absorbed, he felt that Fortesque had come down there for something specific.

"I am sorry the Captain is not here—" began Jim.

"No, it's all right just as it is. I know where he went. Would you mind taking a turn down the dock?"

Jim crossed to the deck, petted the plump, rosy cheek of the Princess; called Sturgis, returned, and with Fortesque, started down the dock.

"You see, Mr. Conroy," Fortesque began in confidential but distinct undertone, "times like these, the rocks have ears, and dead and rotten timbers are patented instruments to catch even a whisper. Er—ah—now, Mr. Conroy, without ado, the little one, as I understand it, Captain Tilden, or you—or both of you, want to keep?"

"Yes—he—we—have become—"

"Aye—right, now. Of course you know this man Bates—so do we—especially lately. Er—ah—to be brief and plain, this creature is about to get in our way. Er—besides, he must be punished. Ah—you can be immensely valuable because you know something specific about him. Bluntly, Conroy, how would you like to make a pocket-liner for yourself, and a dot—er—ah—say another thousand pounds for—ah—to start the Little One?"

"No—no, Mr. Fortesque, I will do nothing. Captain Tilden—" here words failed him.

"No, Captain Tilden won't do. Besides, he is too rigid; too inflexible—'Old Hickory'—I think you call it in the States."

"But am I flexible—dishonest—?"

"No—no—wait—wait! Er—ah—I'll admit it is a little complicated—you can do something for us—he could not if he would. You can be of great service—worth a lot—you actually saw, and you felt his hand. Captain Tilden's knowledge is hearsay and he cannot swear to it. Conroy, you begin to see the light?"

"I must be stupid—I—"

"Er—ah—no, not stupid. As I said, it is complicated; but I am doing my best to be clear. First I must fix Bates' status; after that it is easy. Besides, there's something else."

They turned about and were coming back towards

the *Durland*. Jim was almost too excited to follow him, but managed to say:

"Yes—Bates?"

"Er—Bates is insane, or he is the most precious blackleg and scoundrel the sea has produced. Withal, he is rabidly anti-English—that old farcical 1776 bloody shirt, you know. He deserted the Norsky tub at Callao, took the steamer and early to-morrow is due here. He's got a personal grudge to settle with Captain Tilden and you. Besides—"

"There must be more than that," Jim interrupted, incredulously.

"Ah—yes, of course there's more—much more. Captain Tilden was big enough, with your help, to throw him out—out of his own ship. Bates owns a quarter interest in the *Durland*—now you see the light? Simmons owns the other three quarters. Simmons is straight and Bates is crooked. I don't understand him—one time, half-baked; another time, coward, ass; hard-boiled thorough-going criminal. As a stupid ass he attacked you and the child; then astonishingly crafty, he fixed the vessel to sink, and got ashore. He was sure she would founder and we would have to pay. That he was murdering all on board did not stop him—a matter of the lives of fourteen men and the child! How long would the boat have lived in that weather,

and even if it floated, a part of the crew and the little one would have perished."

Fortesque seemed to be deliberately arousing the wrath of Jim against Bates. He continued:

"Our proof that he fixed the rudder post, or that he was responsible for the fire, is none too strong, but his starting for the ship's rail with the child was an unqualified deadly assault, a crime everywhere there is a court of justice—and that he overlooked."

They had reached the *Durland,* and were going down the dock again, slower now.

"I don't yet see anything I can do."

Fortesque stopped suddenly, glanced at the *Durland* twice her length away; turned a complete circle—even looked down through the cracks in the weather-worn dock, before he began again. He came close, facing Jim:

"Of course you don't. How can you until I tell you? This detail that takes time and wind I would avoid if I could make you understand that my plan is honest and will injure no one, and will serve justice. Er—ah—now the enemy—Germany, to be plainer—wants the *Durland's* cargo of nitrate. To get the cargo she is willing to take the ship also at a fancy figure. Now, can you see why Bates is coming here on the run—big business—besides squaring Captain Tilden and you?"

"Yes, Mr. Fortesque—but—"

"Oh, yes, Conroy, just a moment and you will fully understand. My Government—the Allies—want the nitrate now in the *Durland,* and will pay as much as Imperial Germany for ship and cargo—and they must get it. Everything equal, Bates would throw us, and being part owner, can at least cause considerable delay.— Ah—you ask how I know? Cable from Simmons via Buenos Aires to Bates and a bank here. How I learn the contents of such cables of course need not interest you. I, perhaps, can make you understand now. Bates here, and at large, as part owner, will only lie to vent his spleen, and—get no more money." Fortesque lowered his face and went on eagerly:

"If you will swear to the facts—nothing more—nothing less—he, Bates, will be taken to Santiago, the Capital, where he will be given hearing. Then at a price satisfactory to Mr. Simmons, the principal owner, the *Durland* and cargo change hands and start quickly for St. George's Channel instead of the North Sea."

"Then—then—" Jim hesitated; "Bates will get his share just the same?"

"Oh, yes; we will do nothing to prevent that, but before he gets out, he must give us some assurance that he will leave the sea."

CHAPTER XV

It was all accomplished exactly as Fortesque planned, so quickly and quietly that even those in the harbor knew nothing of it. It was the orderly working of might with right.

A great ocean tug arose from the sea in the night and gave the *Durland* her hawser. A mighty boost dead against the southeast tradewinds sent her back over the equator into the Canal, and then—on—on into the vortex of a conflagration, the equal of which has never been imagined.

Captain Tilden had not forgotten a clause in his contract providing transportation back to New York in the event of sale, and wages until he got there. He insisted on the same terms for Jim, as Mate, also the entire crew, taking into consideration that they must wait.

No north bound passenger ship left Valparaiso for two—perhaps three weeks—nothing was sure. Jim took the crew to a sailor's boarding house. The best he could get for himself and the Captain was two tiny rooms—one for the man, and one, with a crib for Princess Ann, for himself; there was barely

room to turn around. The manager of the best hotel there, as elsewhere, was wearing over-size hats and enlarged waistbands.

Fortesque's promise was promptly, exactly kept. Attached to the engraved New York Bill of Exchange for the "Little One" was a simple statement that Captain Tilden was to be guided by his own judgment—he was to use it for the babe's benefit as he saw fit. For some reason, Jim did not clearly understand, Fortesque did not as yet want to meet Captain Tilden.

There was something unreal about the magnitude of the whole matter that deprived Jim of the inclination or courage to tell the Captain until he was sure it was not a fantasy or vagary; a stage transaction; a three colored lithographed bill was not always money. Fortesque's intimation that something was coming for the Captain, and that things were not yet completed, which was another vague reason why he did not tell Tilden and why he waited for something to happen.

Living in the hotel, Jim noticed that Fortesque avoided him because he and the Captain were always together.

"Eh, Jim, cheer up!" Tilden burst out at the midday meal, as they were sitting at a small four chair table in the center of the dining room. "Since we left the ship, you seem constantly in the act of go-

ing to or coming from a funeral. I don't like it here any more than you do, but—"

Jim smiled without looking up.

"I don't feel so solemn. Life in this hotel, with a child, is so different from our life and food aboard ship. It is all so unnatural. Every one is acting, trying to appear something they are not."

"Jim, you're right; it might be better if we were in an American port with American cooking. This food was all right for a while, but you're right, Jim; nothing measures up to our ship fare. They don't or can't make such pudding—such as you made when you first came. Oh, I guess we can stand it, but I'll soon be willing to embrace a yellow dog from the States. There's not a familiar face, or even one I've ever seen before.— Yes, there's one. Do you see that fellow alone at the side table?"

Jim looked, though he knew to whom Tilden referred.

"He's an Englishman; I know his face—I'm not sure, but I think he's a marine insurance man—have a notion to ask him."

Jim glanced at the stranger again, and then back at Tilden, but made no response. The Captain's curiosity was soon to be satisfied. Fortesque, who had evidently noticed, arose and came directly to

them. He leaned forward and asked in low, distinct modulation:

"You are Captain Tilden late of the barquentine *Durland?*"

"Yes—yes, sir; sit down." He moved the chair at his left with his foot.

Fortesque moved it a bit more, sat down, still holding his hat and half facing them. He seemed to take it for granted that Jim would understand what he was getting at.

"Ah—er—you may have forgotten me—Fortesque is the name. I did not see much of you at the time, but you may recall that I came at the last moment to survey the barquentine *Durland* before you cleared Mobile?"

"Yes—yes, I know you now. What are you doing in this part of the world?"

"Ah—you can fairly expect me almost anywhere—that is, anywhere in the Americas. I gravitate from the States, adjusting marine losses—I have one here."

"I heard something about a fellow slipping too much cable—"

"Oh—er—it is pitiful, Captain Tilden. He was ready to take cargo next day; instead he opened—he opened her after parts big enough for a coach and four. Fairly good iron clipper, fifteen hundred—but what else can one expect when every man who

has ever had a sextant in his hands, is given a Master's license?"

"Bad enough," Tilden suggested.

"We covered you from Bilboa," Fortesque continued; "just see the difference—fancy—this fellow in harbor with nothing but a lively tide, sinks; while you had about everything that ever happens at sea to contend with, and come in spick and span!"

They had risen from the table by silent consent and walked to the rotunda. Fortesque leaning on his cane, looked sharply at the Captain, but glanced understandingly at Jim as they stood in a triangle.

"Any good Captain would have—"

"Ah—er—Captain, your modesty! No, not one in a thousand; putting out that fire was genius."

"Just a minute, Mr. Fortesque." The Captain had noticed Sturgis at a distance looking much out of place, trying to catch his eye. He beckoned to him.

Sturgis removed his hat as he approached the three.

"What is it, Sturgis?" Tilden asked indulgently.

"Why, sir, it's this: the men all chipped in an' bought the Princess a penambulator and they want to know—you know how it is with nothing to do—they want to know if she can't come down to the boarding house to see 'em?"

"Of course, Sturgis. What is it you say you

got?" he asked, with a sly glance at Fortesque.

"Penambulator—the store man said—it's a kind of a four-wheeler with basket upper works. It's out there—" jerking his full fist towards the side entrance.

"Oh, he means 'perambulator,'" Fortesque observed, interested.

"Jim, you go and fix 'em up. Yes, Sturgis, she'll come—they're not liquored?"

"No, sir, not much," Sturgis called back as Jim followed him out.

"Oh—ah—this child—Princess Ann, do they call her?—was a sort of stowaway, wasn't she?—Isn't it astonishing what will sometimes take hold of a crew?"

"The biggest thing on the ship, Mr. Fortesque. Yes, smuggled aboard in a basket at Mobile. The next biggest is my Mate, young and not heavy, but a sort of God-father to the men. They'll do anything for him."

"Ah—the little one—I suppose—"

"Keep her, of course. Nobody will ever get her from me. Come on, let's see what he's got out here. They have drawn two bonuses and have spent most of them on her. Why, she's got enough stuff—I mean clothing and things—to last till she's of age!" Tilden explained with enthusiasm as they traversed the hallway to the side street where Stur-

gis was explaining to Jim the advantages of the wicker freeboard in a hot climate, and how by a thumb nut in the rigging, the wicker awning lined with blue silk, could be given a list to the port or starboard, or dipped to the bow or stern—and that she steered so easy, it was only fun. He proceeded to demonstrate to Jim, who smilingly walked beside the carriage down the street, not noticing the Captain and Fortesque in the doorway.

"Er—ah—really ornate. The crew gave her the name, Princess Ann?"

"Even before I saw her—"

"Rather remarkable—rather," Fortesque muttered as they retraced the hallway slowly. He pronounced the word in a drawl as though spelling it out. "I'm going to auction off at three this afternoon a ship called *Princess Ann*—the one I mentioned as wrecked in the harbor. You might like to take a look at—"

"No—no." The Captain punctuated with his head and neck his negative; even with his lusty shoulders. "Mr. Fortesque, I left the sea twice to be milked dry by landsmen—skinned, pared to the bone.—Paid fancy prices for experience, too. I've got a big warty club for any man that even suggests—no, no!" He repeated testily. "I know now the sea is the place for me!"

Fortesque adapted his third stiff leg and while

lighting a cigarette, looked down at the Captain, inwardly laughing. He admiringly gauged how bulkily secure his heart and lungs were imbedded behind the barrel-like chest.

"Um—yes,"—he blew the smoke forcibly—"perhaps you didn't get me."

"Of course, Mr. Fortesque," Tilden broke in, "I know ships just as well as you know underwriting ships. If I can help you in any—"

"Oh, splendid; glad you offer—don't you know, I think you can. The sale has been advertised extensively and I understand there's a lot of bidders here—junk men, you know. If the bids are not satisfactory, as she lays in the mud, we propose selling out in parcels. Suppose you look her over and tell me what you think. The sale is at the Republic Auction rooms—three-thirty, to be exact; would you mind? Your judgment will be unbiased and I assure you it will be appreciated."

Going to and bidding at auctions is a disease, the same as kleptomania and poker playing. "Something for nothing" is the underlying principle of all of them, which, of course, does not square with the law of use, nor golden rule, nor the Decalogue.

Auction rooms and bidders look the same in every part of the world. The highly contagious "bidding disease" stamps brutal trickery on the face. To-day, the would-be bidders were mostly junk dealers who,

also the world over, add to their already disfigured countenances, a total disregard of the laws of personal hygiene. Suspicious and distrustful, they loitered about. They furtively watched the big clock over the Auctioneer's high desk, the hands of which would soon indicate three-thirty.

When Tilden left the hotel for the wreck, Jim was still absent. He had taken the Princess to visit the men, but when he came to the auction, he found him waiting there.

Fortesque had also had a short talk with Jim. There had not been much said. There was no need. The Insurance Adjuster found that he could convey much to the latter by mere suggestion.

Immediately after Tilden, Fortesque came in hurriedly, as usual lifting his cane high, still bearing the invisible load on his wobbly knees. He nodded and smiled at them, but went directly to the Auctioneer who was shuffling some papers about on his desk that was just under the clock. After a short consultation with the Auctioneer, Fortesque beckoned to the Captain and Jim.

"Ah—er—how did you find her, Captain?" he asked across the Auctioneer's desk.

"Of course we had too little time. Her sails and upper gear are in first-class condition, and it seems too bad to scrap that hull—cut her off stern and she'd make a fine barge."

"Captain, what is her removable gear worth?"

"Eh, sir—a lot of money just now, but not here; this is not in the world, man."

"Ah—er—Captain, considering the location on the map, would two hundred pounds sterling be little enough for her as she lays?" asked Fortesque, looking at Jim.

"Eh, man; her mainsail spread would cost more in New York!"

"Ah—will you bid that?"

"Just to start her off—" chimed in the Auctioneer with a hypnotic smile.

"As I told you, I don't want to get mixed up with anything—"

Jim, who seemed to be waiting for this moment, lightly laid the tips of his fingers on the long arm. The Captain hesitated.

Fortesque gave the Auctioneer a significant glance, and the latter with the deftness and agility of an athlete, arose, whisked the hands of the clock around to three-thirty-one, resumed his seat and instantly began in only a conversational tone:

"Two hundred pounds I am bid for the wrecked ship *Princess Ann* as a whole as she lays. Two hundred pounds—two hundred pounds sterling—two hundred—sold—to Captain Tilden for two hundred pounds sterling.—Captain, any arrangements you make with Mr. Fortesque about the money

will be all right." The last he fairly flung back as he disappeared.

As soon as Tilden grasped just what had happened, the enormous chest filled to explode an indignant protest, but something in Jim's hand that again touched his elbow lightly, gently, closed the valve of wrath. He exhaled slowly, instead, without a sound.

Fortesque watched, with elbow resting heavily on the Auctioneer's desk.

"Captain," Jim began in a voice most convincing and confident, "her name is *Princess Ann.* Hasn't Princess Ann saved you once?"

"But, Jim, it can't be done," began the Captain, aggrieved; "I haven't got two hundred pounds and can't get it—"

This was Fortesque's cue:

"Captain Tilden, ah—er—we have carried on your ship and cargo during your last two voyages two hundred thousand pounds. We feel certain you saved us large sums—half of it, anyhow. Ah—your word is all the security I want for the two hundred—the ship is yours. As the Mate says—the name is a charm. No hurry about the money; here is your bill."

A clerk handed him a bill of sale; an elaborate paper with a border lithographed in two colors about the size—of his Master's license. *Princess*

Ann was all the dazed seaman could see on it.

Jim touched him again lightly on the elbow. He did not fold—he rolled the evidence of his ownership and carried it in his hand. He and Jim left the place, passing out through the junk dealers who had yet to learn they could not buy, strip or gut the *Princess Ann.*

CHAPTER XVI

THE platitude: "There is no sentiment in business," is without the slightest foundation of truth. The zest, the novelty, the breath of life is in successfully squaring sentiment with money making. Such is the law of use, a law of utter simplicity, yet of boundless power.

As Jim led the way from the auction room, Captain Tilden was strangely silent. He marveled without misgiving at the strange influence of the boy now walking beside him, leading the way. He recalled that the pressure of the tips of his fingers on his arms had been more convincing than words. Loyalty with consistent selfishness gave Jim that subtile power.

Down the waterfront they headed to pass the crew's boarding house. Jim first broke the silence:

"You see, Captain, you may have overlooked or forgotten that you have a full crew, wages paid, who are spoiling for something to do, and who are as sentimental about Princess Ann as a—a schoolgirl."

"Well, they're pretty strong for you too, Jim."

"I've tried to treat 'em right, but the child is the strongest pull and a ship of the same name coupled with their secret confidence in and admiration for you, will hit them between the eyes. Won't the cabin be away ahead of our quarters at the hotel?"—

"Wait a minute." Jim had darted away, leaving Tilden thinking and inclined to grow moody.

"See, that's their house—most any forecastle will beat it for comfort," Jim said, returning; and they started on again.

"Spanish John's locked up—too much Spanish wine; I'll get him out to-morrow morning. I left the Princess Ann with them." Jim laughed lightly. "They have her in the carriage as a throne in one end of the room, and are singing to her!"

They were still on "Water Street." Every seaport in the world has a "Water Street";—houses mere shacks; an occasional ornamental iron fence about a second story veranda, unpainted and weather worn; dirt and squalor. In hot climates, half clad, brown, unwashed children mingle here unchecked with goats, chickens, and mule carts.

At first Captain Tilden thought it strange that Jim knew the shortest and the best way. He did not say anything about it until they got further out where the houses were scattered, and trees dusty and stunted. Lean-to kitchens, mule stables, and pig

sties, all covered with old boards, rusty, corrugated iron, or tin. They were relieved when they could see tide water.

"The tide is now about flood," Jim ventured.

"Jim, you seem to know about the wreck—when did you see it?"

Though Jim had been expecting the blunt question, he was no better prepared. As an outright liar, he was a signal failure.

"I—I—well—this insurance man asked Sturgis and me to come out here and look her over—just as he did you—"

"You didn't say anything about it—"

"No-o—not then—but—but I'm perfectly willing to talk now—"

Tilden's cross between a laugh and a grunt seemed to come from his waistband.

"Well, Jim, this far off she looks like a lost soul stuck in a swamp on the edge of creation. In this tide her decks appear to be awash. Her bow dips slightly like she was praying for deliverance."

"No," responded Jim, as they rounded a fish house that backed into the mud flat at low tide. "They say her deck has never been awash." A walk on stilts took them over the tide lands to deep water. An old man, bent from rowing a half century, was waiting for them. Captain Tilden sat down in the stern beside Jim, as one willing to let

the will and personality of the younger prevail—anyhow, in small matters.

To the old man, who faced them, rowing slowly, he said.

"You have lost your job?"

"Everything has an end but life;"—the voice was expressionless as were the red, watery eyes. "I have been aboard the wreck for over half a year." He spoke in broken English. "I would like to stay, but Gloria Munda!—a ship is no better than a man. Our bodies must pass. This ship is like me—her head is sound. In six months she took not enough water to drown a rat, but her stern, ah—it is fast in mud." Through scattered, discolored teeth, came a weak laugh. "Every month the water comes higher," he went on; "it is high to-day; some day it will wash over," he muttered—"then we will go."

Everything about the ship had a new, deeper interest for the Captain. Was it because he now owned it, that her name was *Princess Ann,* or did the thought of profit vitalize his interest? Scanning it, they came closer.

True clipper, built for the East India trade before Sir Bessemer discovered the process of making steel that bears his name. Her hull was of good quality—the quality of iron made then. The water, now at high tide, was scarce above her load line. There was nothing, even to his practiced eye, to indicate

that she was not ready to weigh anchor, slightly overburdened aft. She had two water-tight bulkheads dividing her hold into three compartments. The after compartment crushed in, filled; thus lowered, struck the mud first. Likely the wind held her bow in deep water until fixed there by the mud and sand brought by a sluggish tide.

Captain Tilden made for the forecastle the moment he was up the ladder. There was no reason why it should not be fit for the men, but he wanted to be sure. Back on the main deck, he searched aloft. Every sail looked perfect, ready to sail. She was built to go. Her bow, like an axe, tapered to the cutwater. She was built far better than they build at the present day. He stopped on the deck—such oak is seldom used now. The overmuch brass trimming was encrusted in a hard greenish coating.

"Great Heavens!—what an economic loss!" he thought, starting toward the cabin. He had gone into the cabin when there in the morning. "A ship good for half a century or more—fifteen hundred tons—yes—lost by carelessness—and the world's despairing cry is for ships and more ships."

He paused in the galley—complete in detail, but much larger than necessary. The cabin was really a deckhouse. It extended well forward the mizzenmast, with liberal deck space between it and the

rail.—Yes, an East Indian. Carried passengers one time. That explained the oversized galley, the Captain thought to himself. A small salon indicated, more than other parts of the vessel, that brass, mahogany, and labor had been exceedingly cheap when the vessel was built. He went on through the salon to the Captain's and Officers' quarters, furthest astern. They were so commodious that it seemed sheer waste of space. Carpets, rugs, beds, linen and charts—absolutely nothing wanting, but a bit of dusting and brass polish.

He opened doors, windows and skylights to ventilate the cabin. He wondered where Jim went as he sat down in the big chair at the Master's desk.

"I understand it now—why Fortesque let it go so cheap—they had paid the full face of their policy and considered salvage nil. Valparaiso was on the earth, but out of the world because there were no ships. Why, I could scrap it to the amount of two hundred pounds, if sent to a fair market. Just now, her removable gear would bring a fortune in New York, but New York is fully seventy-five degrees north—over five thousand nautical miles distant—and no ships down here."

He looked about him—valuable salvage, yes, without end. If every cargo space was not practically commandeered for nitrate everywhere in the remote parts, millions awaited the arrival of just such a

ship. He happened to know that Java was bursting with sugar that they wanted to sell for two cents a pound, with New York eager to pay twenty—just ten times more. But cargo space—bottoms not filled with mud. All ships must go to war. Java sugar would be just as available were it on the moon. The same way with scrap brass, new masts, sail and all ship's gear.—"Yes, Fortesque knew it had no value here," the Captain said aloud to himself. "Of course, yes, as Jim said, the crew is paid and could work for two or three weeks, and well—it might be stored until after—No, damn the thing! —I wish I'd never heard of Fortesque, or any but the one Princess Ann! I'll see Fortesque to-night and tell him it's hopeless. It cannot be moved now—and when the war's ended, it will not be worth moving!"

At this moment he distinctly heard voices. He fairly bounced from the chair and went through the door opening sternward. Boats were headed for the wreck. Yes, Sturgis was rowing the small boat with full lusty strokes. Jim sat in the stern, and with cautious hand steadied the real Princess Ann in her new four-wheeled street chariot. His whole crew, dunnage and all, were in a long boat—four men at oars pulling sturdily to the chanting he had heard. In the rear came a ship chandler's boat with provisions.

The Princess had concluded her Chilean visit and was now in the act of boarding "her own" ship with entourage complete—servants, sailors and men at arms. They were making a ceremony of it.

"What confounded simpletons!" he exclaimed aloud. "A sailor must have something—bird, beast or reptile to play with,—to worship. In this case it was a child,—a little girl child who had made them her slaves." He counted the men, and not one was missing.

Jim, the rascal, quick to detect the sailors' weakness, was lending himself to the melodrama. He led them as a kindergarten teacher does her brood; he did it by leading with the child. As mother animals are led even to their death, by the sight or cry of their young, so these hardened seamen followed the infant whom they had come to adore.

Then Captain Tilden demonstrated that he himself was no more than a boy at heart and a true sailor. He moved along the deck and planted himself there as solid as the mainmast. He was the Commander who, observing his royal passenger approach, would make the ship kneel to receive her and hers. This accomplished, he would give the order to man the windlass. Indeed this he would have really done were not his whole stern compartment filled with five hundred tons of water, miscellaneous sea life, and mud.

The long boat came alongside first. The crew went over the side like monkeys. Then the boat pushed away to make room for the small boat and Princess Ann.

Where they got it, no one pretended to know. Larceny had been committed to further the purpose. A long strip of carpet was laid from the ladder to the entrance of the cabin. The men divided on either side, standing at attention, and with assumed solemnity awaited the Princess, who, somehow, came over the side sitting upright in the chariot. Then, as the last act, Jim, smiling indulgently, rolled the little carriage over the carpet between them to the cabin door. Then, so far as the sailors were concerned, it was all over.

Every man of them jumped for his dunnage. In a moment more, outrigged blocks with tackle raising the provisions from the boat, spoke snappily. The crew knew their season of play was ended.

The Captain was at his desk when Jim pushed the Princess through the carpeted salon into Captain Tilden's own quarters, as roomy as a hotel parlor. He saw nothing but the advancing child; she waved both tiny arms, and laughed a greeting. She took hold of his offered forefinger—her handful. The soft pressure was a delight.

The Captain arose from his chair and kissed her forehead. Jim, feeling sure that the kiss stamped

his approval on all that had been done, exulted.

"Jim," the Captain began, raising his eyes, but not his head—"rather a sudden change, even for a sailor. Er—what have you done at the hotel?"

"Why," Jim halted a little and looked down at the child; "I knew you weren't satisfied with the food, and the quarters are nothing compared with this." Here Jim glanced a sweeping survey. "I just paid up—your chest and everything will be aboard in a few moments—I hope you—"

"It's all right, Jim; better for every one just now. But, Jim, though this man Fortesque may have meant all right, he has handed us a white elephant. There's any amount of salvage here, but with no local market and no transportation. It is the same—or worse—than nothing—like a swimmer escaping—he may take so many possessions that he will sink!"

Jim stood by the wheeled chariot; he hovered near it as for protection—and inspiration.

"As you know, he asked Sturgis and me to examine things." Here Jim looked out the cabin window. The small boat had gone back and was returning with the dunnage. It gave him time to weigh what he wanted to say. "You have got to give Sturgis credit—"

"Eh, Jim; I do give him credit, he is a good man—he will help us a lot when we know what we're go-

ing to do. After we have dinner, I'm going ashore to see Fortesque. I've got to tell him. The only possible way is to strip everything valuable and store it and wait until after the war, but I suppose it's like everything else here—they'd want from us the value of all the land between here and Tierra del Fuego for storage."

"Don't you think it best to see Sturgis before—"

"Not till I see Fortesque. This is so unusual; I feel we are on such thin ice now. We'll shake things up fast enough as soon as we know—as soon as I am sure."

"I'll hurry dinner so you can go soon." Jim seemed to know just what this trip ashore would accomplish.

The Captain was so absorbed in his play with Princess Ann that he was only dimly conscious of activity in the adjoining salon, where they would dine. He hardly noticed Jim on the other side of the table, even after they sat down—it was a big round table. He was deciding on just what he would say to Fortesque; he had never been so placed before. He did not like to be in his or any one's debt.

He got ashore and went directly to the hotel only to be disappointed. They told him there that Mr. Fortesque had just left on the Trans-Andean train for Buenos Aires.

"When will he return?" repeated the clerk. "I do not know that he intends to return; he has checked out."

As the Captain rowed back to the wreck, he felt as though he was drifting without steerage. Finally his jaws came together with a snap.

Jim was not surprised at his quick return, nor at his request that Sturgis be summoned. Neither was he surprised to hear him explode when Sturgis began to talk.

"Nonsense—idiotic nonsense!" Then bouncing out of the big chair as though a trip hammer had struck the seat from below, he added: "I should have known better and waited until you were aboard longer!"

Sturgis sat on a camp stool some distance from the Captain, hunched forward in true forecastle manner, with his mild laughing blue eye and his stern black one both fixed on him. Jim was walking about expectantly hopeful. An especially good reflector oil lamp that he had filled and cleaned, enabled him to see both faces clearly. The Princess slept in her chariot in the dimmest corner.

Sturgis grinned.

Jim laughed.—

"No, Captain," the latter said; "while Sturgis is not a teetotaller, he's all right now."

"All right, then." Captain Tilden reared back

making his chair creak. Just as suddenly changing to a tolerant skeptic, he exclaimed: "You—both of you—go ahead and tell me just how you propose to float this ship!"

CHAPTER XVII

INCREDULITY is a progress-blocking, formless monster hatched in Hell from the egg of ignorance. Captain Tilden's incredulity was of such proportions that Jim and Sturgis were bowled over. For the moment both felt that their deductions, though made from careful observations, were actually foolish.

Jim was the first to recover.

"Go ahead, Sturgis, you can't get hung for saying what you think of the shipwreck," he rather testily urged, though smiling infectiously at both men.

Captain Tilden, realizing that he had perhaps expressed himself too vigorously, returned Jim's smile, and thus assured, Sturgis with his stern eye fixed on the Captain, began:

"Of course I know you think just as I did when the Mate, here, mentioned it—that the insurance people would not pay for her as a total loss without knowing what they were doing. In my time I have known underwriters to make mistakes—maybe they did this time; they're just men. Then again, they may know a little more about her than I do."

Tilden lighted his pipe, blew out the match, and nodded to Sturgis to go on.

"When they ripped out the passenger accommodations and made her over into straight cargo, they put in two water-tight bulkheads, giving her three compartments—forward, amidship, and aft. Now I tried the pumps on the forward and amidships, and they're dry. Her second bottom is only plank and her bilge keel is high, being clipper. Now when the Mate, here and me came over the first time, the wind was right to make a low ebb, and I walked around her stern. More'n half of her forward is in clear water now. The next time we came, it was near flood, but water in the hold did not change, showing the stove-in is stopped with mud."

"Yes, Sturgis; then what?" demanded Tilden.

"Captain, I stripped and the Mate let me down in the after hold, didn't you, Mate?"

Jim, walking up and down, nodded.

"The water is deep, and of course we couldn't get enough light, but I found this out, and know that the stove-in is only on the starboard. Her plates is exactly a fathom less four. I worked myself down in this mud till I was head under at least a half fathom several times, and I'm sure that only three plates deep is stove in, and the break is not more'n two fathoms long."

"How much bigger would you expect?—Fortesque was right about the coach and four; and her

plates, I notice, are only three-quarters soft iron," said the Captain, pointing his pipe towards the carpenter.

"Mebbe the insurance people think," continued Sturgis solemnly, "the break extends clear across to the port, and that would mean her keel was gone—her back broken; but I know her port plates aren't touched and I believe her keel is as good as the day it was laid, an' her plates being soft is the thing—they can be bent back."

"Sturgis, do you realize this is South America and about five thousand miles from anywhere?—and the only thing you can get here to repair a ship with is onions, or chile concarne, or red beans? However, we'll suppose for a moment you're right; agree that the port plates and keel are sound; that there is but a hole in the starboard big enough to take in a canal boat—what then?"

Sturgis showed his blue eye and grinned.

"Tie her head, pump all the water out; then take enough mud out so that we can work. Jack the plates back as best we can, then fill the hole with cement, letting a brace to hold it, run clear over to the port side."

"Cement—you're insane, Sturgis—"

"Yes, Captain—cement. Why can't we? They're building cement ships!" The sailor was mildly insistent.

"They're trying to—one filled and sank as soon as she left the ways—"

"But one's afloat too, carrying cargo, Captain. I went into the yard where they're building one to see how they did it."

Captain Tilden suddenly became serious—looked hard at Jim, who continued to walk—and again addressed Sturgis:

"Cement—cement—yes, maybe; but there it is again—where the Devil are you going to get cement?"

"The Mate—" Sturgis jerked his thumb toward Jim, who stopped where he was, and spoke:

"Yes, Captain, I inquired a little. There is some Portland Cement—"

"How much do you think you'd need, Sturgis—enough to fill the whole after hold with concrete? Then you think she'll float—what will hold her bow? Sturgis, you're—"

"Captain, a hundred bags will do—five short tons and four times that much sand and gravel. Fifteen or twenty tons won't throw her head up much. She'll sail in ballast; I count then you can sail her to a respectable bone yard—this is no place for a Princess Ann." Sturgis, like many men, stalled miserably for want of words, when he tried to express sentiment. "Just give the men a chance—they'll do double watches—anything. That's better

than talking!" he finally blurted, rising to his feet.

Captain Tilden looked over where the tiny maid, Princess Ann, slept. Jim came close to the carpenter, giving strength to, and endorsing his words.

"Sturgis, how's everything in the forecastle?" Captain Tilden finally asked, looking down.

"Not a growl—that's it—it'll hold twice as many, and is better'n most cabins, and what a great galley!" Sturgis, enthusiastic again, started to go.

"Well, we'll see—we'll see. Set a harbor watch and we'll think it over, Sturgis."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Captain Tilden knocked the ashes from his pipe and slowly began filling it from a leather pouch, the while his eyes danced and finally he turned towards Jim, who had taken a seat near the wheeled crib.

"Jim, what do you—that is—you seem to have been planning all this?"

Jim had the prudence to see that he was not being consulted, and only looked at the Captain, maintaining silence.

"It'll—Jim—it'll take a lot of money and—if it don't work, I'm busted again and in debt besides; and I don't like the way Fortesque ran off without—he's only got my word for a thousand dollars. It smells mysterious, and you—that is—I feel as though I were being pushed, and—"

"Wait a minute," Jim now interrupted; "as I see it, Fortesque knows he is safe. He knows that this crew will strip enough off this wreck to pay you a profit. Even though you were inclined to be dishonest, you would have to pay or leave the sea—the underwriters are the power now. Besides, Fortesque is different; he is more important than he pretends, and knows more about our Princess Ann than we think."

The Captain's head went back as though by the weight of his lower brain. He scrutinized the polished upper cross beams of the cabin.

"That's how he got Bates so easy, Captain," continued Jim.

"Bates! That rogue—what has he to do with Fortesque?"

"Oh, a lot, Captain."

"He has, has he?—isn't that strange?"

"No—not so strange, when you consider how much the underwriters stood to lose by him." Jim hesitated, still in doubt as to how much he should tell. "It was this way; Bates was about to interfere with Fortesque's plans; they arrested and put him in prison here."

"How could he—or rather how did he?"

"I'll explain; you were right, Captain, about his having a pull—the remaining quarter interest in the *Durland* was owned by Bates. When the sale was

completed and the *Durland* gone, Chile gave him a ticket of leave. If he stays clear of the sea, they'll let him alone. I guess he's really gone this time—from these parts, anyhow."

"Jim, how do you know all this?" asked Tilden, open-eyed.

"Because they—in order to have Bates arrested, I had to swear to certain things—facts only."

"Jim, you did this without my knowledge?" The Captain's face was clouded.

"That day you went to Santiago—Fortesque said it wouldn't wait until you got back—they had to act quickly to take Bates before he landed."

The Captain sensed evasion, certainly youthful indiscretion. The babe moved slightly, attracting his attention.

"What do you think Fortesque knows about *Princess Ann,* that he has not told?" he asked in a level voice.

"You mean about the ship?"

"The ship, and the child too."

"I cannot give any single definite reason for believing he knows anything. I think, however, he wants to do something for you because—well, in a way—in a way he told you so—and for some reason he is greatly interested in the child. Just how or why, I don't know. He believes you can do 'most anything with a ship; maybe raise this

one and sail her to where there is a good market for salvage, enabling you to take care of her—Princess Ann—without other help."

"Eh, nothing to that, Jim. Why didn't Fortesque himself tell me this, if it's the case?"

"Discretion, perhaps; it's difficult to guess how his affairs are interwoven in times like these—how his movements are scrutinized, how he may not want to have an actual knowledge of some things."

"Jim, the whole thing is queer. I'm in doubt about it. When he wanted anything from you—as Master, I was the one for him to come to—but maybe—as you say, they had to act within an hour."

"That's just it, Captain. Oh, I've no doubt there was some intrigue. They didn't cheat Bates; only the ship and cargo went where they wanted her—went to England instead of Germany, and without delay; but, Captain, that's past. Bates is out of the way for the present, anyhow. You own this ship. Can you make her set on the water instead of in the mud?" Jim had been walking to and fro between the Captain and the sleeping child. He now stopped in front of the Captain. "If you can, just her mainmast will sell for more than all you owe Mr. Fortesque."

"Well, eh, Jim"—Captain Tilden removed his

pipe and looked down—"we'll see—it won't take long now. We have gone so far—go and get Sturgis and we will go into it again."

Before midnight, two pumps from the forward compartments were both unshipped and pressed into service in the after hold. Two men on each, worked with the snap and rhythm of steam-driven engines. At the pace they set, one hour shift was all they could stand.

At daylight, flood tide, the Captain went down into the hold. The water had been lowered until planks resting on the mud carried his weight. Though the water in the hold was a fathom lower than it was outside, there was no visible inflow, proving that the immense jagged tear in her side had filled solidly with sand and mud.

At breakfast he was inwardly elated, but his face was serious. He knew it was a tremendous undertaking they had planned.

"Biggest kind of a gamble—can't tell anything about seepage until we get further. We can't lift mud with these pumps, and there are hundreds of tons of it," he told Jim as soon as they were seated. "I think—I think, Jim, you had better pass the word that if we win, every one comes in on it. What we do must be done quickly and it'll tear the life out of them."

"Does money gain move every one to his utmost? —I know most people think it does, but I think every man of the crew will work harder to save the *Princess Ann* for Princess Ann."

"Maybe, Jim." The Captain halted, surprised, looking curiously, boldly across the table. It suddenly dawned on him that his Mate was no longer thin, emaciated, a shaky-voiced convalescent; his voice, though high-pitched, was strong; his body had filled, particularly from the waist up. The blue flannel shirt did not bag and hang loosely. His cheek bones were no longer prominent and his charcoal hair, a trifle long and bushy now, framed his face and made it look rather small, but did not conceal the breadth and height of forehead, that in itself, was unusual. There was something about the curve from the tip of his shoulders up to his ear, and his unusual upright sitting posture that suggested dignity. The Captain was conscious of a slight unformed wonderment, but Jim affected no notice of this scrutiny, and went on:

"You see, Captain, I have studied these men. They are as human as any one. Perhaps by reason of their isolation and contact with the sea, they are unduly sentimental. They day-dream, are extravagantly romantic, and their strongest impelling force is not love of gain; as a matter of fact—"

"Yes, you're partially right, Jim; but it is pos-

sible that gain would be an added incentive—besides, it's only fair."

Jim hesitated.

"Well, let's see—here's the real Princess Ann; were you thinking of money when the child castaway smiled at you from the basket?"

"Well—hasn't the Princess proved a valuable asset just considered as such?" retorted the Captain.

"Perhaps, but it was your heart and no thought of gain that decided in her favor at first. Were the men thinking in terms of gain when they, with wonderful patience, made soft clothing of coarse sailcloth, and afterwards spent their money on fine things for her?—No, I think it was the inborn love of child life."

"You don't mention yourself in this at all. You have done more than the rest—you should take credit," interrupted the Captain.

"No, I cannot, because I deserve nothing. I did it and do it, to satisfy myself—self-defense. Who deserves anything for doing things to satisfy an inherent longing—or for failing to do anything to escape the misery of a pricking conscious? These men have not learned to think, to reason. Of the impelling forces within them, they are ignorant."

Captain Tilden pushed back from the table, turned half around, and looked toward the room where the

Princess was sleeping. With the filling of his pipe came new thoughts:

"Jim, I'm going ashore—you say you found where we can get some cement?"

CHAPTER XVIII

When Captain Tilden returned, the table was spread and the mid-day meal waiting.

His face was flushed; he was hot in body and mind, though the row from wharf to wreck had cooled both somewhat.

"Shore people are the Devil to deal with anywhere!" he muttered. Just thinking of them made him shake his head angrily. His knowledge of Spanish was limited and nothing but "that lingo" had been talked to him here.

As he came over the side, Jim's face had helped him to recover decent poise. He had come himself to tell the Captain that luncheon waited. The iced lemonade he found at his elbow was so refreshing that he drank a second glass before he broke out:

"Jim, I've had the Devil's own time! Cement—yes, plenty, but sand and gravel—nothing doing! Spanish gibberish— 'No—No, Señor'—is all I could get out of them. But tell me, how are things aboard?"

"The water is all out, Captain, and they are digging in the mud. I have not talked with Sturgis for a while; I'll ask him to come in. Of course by this

time you know Sturgis.— He is a little over-sure. He is imaginative, but without his imagination, he'd be a common sailor. He's got the whole crew afire with the notion she'll float."

If Sturgis had not smiled when he came in, he could easily have been mistaken for a grotesque-eyed automaton made out of cloth, reinforced with mud.

"Sturgis, what's the last word?" Tilden asked, smiling.

"Of course you know the water's out. We've dug down along the line of the bilge keel. You know they laid extra metal there to steady her in the seaway. It's just like I thought all the time. I went along with a sounding bar every half foot. The break stops at the bilge keel—that's just two plates from the keel. I've got the size of the break. It ain't as bad as I said. Only two plates is busted up and down, and not more'n six feet long—and of course her port side's sound."

"Still, Fortesque's coach and four was conservative. As you figure it, Sturgis, the actual break is about seven by six feet?"

"Yes—oh, she's got a wallop—Davy was after her all right."

"How about seepage?"

"Not much, Captain—can't tell for sure yet, but there's been no inflow for some time. Them fish

you've eaten was inside—they couldn't get out. When'll we get cement?" he asked, suddenly shifting his weight to the other foot and making an abortive hitch at his mud incased trousers.

"Eh—Sturgis, cement? I can get cement aboard before night, but sand—gravel—these gringoes!" The Captain's face reddened at the mere thought of them.

Jim glanced at Sturgis, who then interrupted:

"Captain, the Mate here was reading to me out of a book that to make a ship-shape repair job, the sand and gravel have got to be washed clean. There's a gravel point out across the harbor and the long boat will float 'most a ton—"

"But the mixture—the mixture of cement and sand must be right, or she'll go like a rotten mainsail!" Tilden exclaimed.

"The Mate and me," Jim looked up from his food—"got some and it's about like the book said—what was it, Mate—three gravel to one cement?"

Jim nodded.

"There can be no chance about that, boys," said the Captain.

"Can we get something by way of a screen ashore?" Jim asked, by way of a reply.

"We're on the back of the world, but—well, maybe we can get a screen. Oh, Sturgis, you'd better steady her by sending a line each way from

her. If by any chance she shifts, the least bit now, all bets will be off."

"Aye, sir."

The meal was finished in silence. The Captain was thinking of how impotent he would be without Jim, who inspired Sturgis and the crew. Winning, the credit was rightfully theirs. Of losing, he simply refused to think. He saw how Jim was coaxing Sturgis and the crew on, by making them think they were doing it.

"That boy is the very genius of management, and by Heavens! a real Mate."

Jim, however, was thinking how necessary it was to have the Captain's superior mind pass on their working plans. He got up, produced a fairly accurate plan of the after part of the ship, showing the break from two elevations, and as Jim explained the plans, and pointed with his forefinger, the finger came in for particular attention.

"He would keep his hands nice, naturally—any one who would keep a child so neat, under whose care she was so rosy, fat and lusty, would, of course practice personal hygiene," was the Captain's silent comment. Nevertheless, the Mate had an unusually attractive hand.

Jim was telling him how Sturgis was going to jackscrew the broken plates as best he could. He would introduce between layers of concrete, water-

proof sailcloth; how they would form the concrete into a giant "I" beam that would extend the full width of the vessel, and engage the port side as a full monolithic casting.— There would be seepage but a pump would keep that down.

"Jim," Captain Tilden uttered the name solicitously. He had taken several paces toward the room where the Princess lay and turned capstan-like to look at Jim, who remained sitting.— "Jim, have you thought of what will happen if we fail?—when we face this crew as failures?"

Jim sobered. He glanced down his straight nose as if he were using it as a sextant or transit to fix just where under them the crew was at the moment working.

"We are not—we cannot fail!"

"Eh, Jim; I understand; I am willing to play the game—a game I know something of, but this is just a big gamble. If it fails—well, you know we've got our transportation to the States."

Jim flashed the improvised sextant towards the Captain.

"We—the crew, understand, and I have got—I have not spent my—Captain, wait; we will not fail!" he asserted doggedly.

"I don't say it to discourage, but just to temper or draw the temper of your enthusiasm, you know, Jim. I have often watched the blacksmith; after he

makes and tempers a tool, he gives it a gentle heat for a moment to draw some of the temper. The tool works better; is more reliable."

Encouraged by Jim's eager glance, Tilden continued:

"A ship has never been repaired this way. It's new, and still more, any one of the numerous perils of the sea described in our 'Charter Parties' as Acts of God, can defeat us."

"Yes, Captain, I know that we are not in dry dock. The weather, tides and shifting channel, the sunken rocks are on one side and mud flats on the other. At this point in the harbor we might—"

"I'd rather be out in an open roadstead," Captain Tilden interrupted.

"I know that we have only you and your wonderful skill as a navigator between us and the elements. I know this process of stopping up a big hole in the side of a ship is new, but, Captain, has it occurred to you that about everything that has happened since we sailed from Mobile, is new, and, being basically sound—I mean in conformity with all law as interpreted by the Great Judge, we—you have overcome all obstacles? Why should we expect an act of God? Why should Providence now offer us more than hurdles? Hurdles we must always take—they stand for strength. I tell you, Captain,"—Jim arose and took one step towards him;

he looked out of the cabin window to the blue wavering line of the stupendous Andes that split the continent, giving Chile so little and Argentine so much. "I tell you, Captain," he repeated, facing him squarely: "I believe that if we do our utmost—go to the limit and then don't float the *Princess Ann,* it will be because we should not. I mean by that, a failure will be best for all concerned, in the end."

CHAPTER XIX

During the next week though frequently consulted about the work, Captain Tilden spent much of his time with Princess Ann in his lap, or he had her sitting on his desk in front of him.

When they had finished the concrete work, he went down in the hold to inspect for the first time.

A concrete "I" beam four feet wide crossed the vessel from the uninjured port side to the hole in the opposite starboard side, where it held or supported as it were, a plug or patch that filled the break and well overlapped the great hole in the vessel's side. A landsman would know it as a concrete partition four feet thick across the vessel, from the very bottom to the top of the break.

"Oh, yes, of course the plates were all stove inward; we jackscrewed them back the best we could, enough anyhow to offer the best possible reinforcing for the patch," Jim explained after they had returned to the cabin.

Captain Tilden was in his big chair at the desk. Jim moved about expectantly.

"How soon can you begin discharging the mud?" Tilden asked, puffing smoke lazily.

"Almost any time, but won't it be putting too much strain on green concrete if we do it very soon? Authorities say thirty days before a maximum strain—fifteen before a moderate one, and but very little strain inside a week."

"Jim, you mean it will be unsafe to remove all the mud under fifteen days?"

At this moment there was a wail from Jim's room. He took the babe up, placed her in her chariot and wheeled her out before he replied:

"Yes—we ought to wait a week before we begin throwing out the mud. In the meantime, what can we do to keep the men busy? They'll get uneasy with nothing to do."

"Um, yes; that's so," began Captain Tilden, with both teeth and lips on the pipe stem. "First, you can overhaul the steering gear. If possible, free the rudder enough to make sure it was not injured when she went on. Shake out every cloth and see that they are sound—go home right. That's quite a job."

"Do you think she will float when the mud is all out?" Jim asked.

"Only a guess, Jim, what she will do. It might take three or four tugs to break her loose. If the tide and wind combined, she might come off before we wanted her to, but I'm pretty sure it will take a pretty stiff beam strain from a tug to break the

suction of the mud. I mean, of course, the atmospheric pressure. That reminds me—I must have a chart of this harbor."

"Where—that is—for what port will we clear, Captain?" Jim asked, facing him with something of a twinkle.

"Jim, your assurance is stronger than a bottle of rum." The Captain pulled at his pipe, regarding him curiously. He recalled that he had never seen him smoking anything, or taking a drink. "If we get off and are able to sail after we do—there's only one port for us—San Francisco. Tolls through the canal would kill us—and going around the Horn in a cripple is out of the question."

"How much would the canal tolls be, Captain?"

"Something more than a dollar a ton, and she registers over fifteen hundred."

"Wouldn't she be worth that much more on the Atlantic side—in New York, for instance?"

"Maybe—but what's the use if we can't pay the toll? If we can provision decently for 'Frisco, we will be lucky." He did not seem to hear what Jim said, before he went out,—that he thought they would have an unusually low tide and it might be a good time right now to try freeing the rudder.

The Captain soberly realized that all the interest he had manifested thus far in the enterprise was only a reflection projected mainly by Jim. Not-

withstanding the fact that everything had been developed as planned, in his heart he still felt no confidence. He blamed himself as the weaker, when he had allowed the personality of Fortesque to dominate and thrust the ship on him. He did not blame Jim—he had only responded to the same influence. He felt he was being carried along by some strange, secret power, and though the small voice within him said "No," he did not, could not, resist. Who was it now?— Was it this boy, Jim, or was it the child?

He had not thought of a port because he did not believe they would sail anywhere. It was true, possibilities had been forced upon him by this same influence. From a sort of dream stuff, he knew that if the ship could be properly salvaged, he would have more money than he had ever again expected to possess. That she might ever carry cargo!— He dismissed the thought as a nebulous fantasy.

His pipe went out, but he continued holding it with his hand resting on the desk, lost to the world in the struggle with himself. When the Princess, while cooing away, threw her nursing bottle down on the desk, he still steadily gazed ahead. He knew that to be delivered from friends and the well intentioned, one must at times pray. On the other hand, whoever had only a square deal up his sleeve was never downed long.

He heard the men working about the helm. He knew by the voices of Jim and Sturgis that he would be told that the steering gear was uninjured. This seemed to fix in his mind the impression that he was somehow being groomed for a herculean effort. His eyes and arms traveled to the playful, powerful mite of innocence.

If he had the definite knowledge that a crisis was near, it would have reduced his power to meet it. But he did not know why he started ashore at once to get a chart of the harbor. The tide was so low that it left a long stretch of mud between the channel and the fish house, the usual landing. For that reason he had the man row down the channel until they were abreast the city.

When he left the wreck, the men were still working about the stern. There was no water in the opening then made and the tide was still on the ebb.

A sailor rowed him slowly down the channel. He amused himself by noting the points now exposed where an enterprising government properly appreciative of ocean commerce, would erect beacons and buoys. As it was, even a native tugboat Captain could easily get into trouble. He turned and looked back at the *Princess Ann*. Oozy flats on one side and rocks on the other—there wasn't much choice. How she had drifted into such a position without

encountering some of the many obstructions, was a mystery—a sea vagary. The harbor was like a mill pond. It was so hot he could work up little interest in anything.

A ship chandler finally got the chart for him. As he was being rowed back he spread it open on his knees to see how well the surveyors had done their work. He had found mistakes and bad ones in other charts. This was an 1877 survey, almost too old for present use. He silently castigated the Chilean Government for indifference to the only commerce that might give it life, that gave it a place on the map.

"Not so bad after all," was the result of his scrutiny, causing the sailor rowing him to look at him curiously. "Here's a light buoy on a sand bar." Though not yet sundown, the light was burning. Beyond he could see a channel spar buoy. Searching beyond that again for harbor marks, his eye riveted as though he faced a specter—a phantom:—a full-rigged ship bearing down upon them and towards the city. Every sail from sky sail to main was set, but how could that be in this dead, weather-breeding calm? Then the Captain smiled, but the smile instantly froze on his face, seriousness—melancholy, even, taking its place. The old East Indian *Princess Ann,* pride of her builders, she of a thousand weathered storms, stood proudly erect between

him and the setting sun, a grand old dame, though fatally stricken, in full regalia, summoning her last iota of strength to stand erect.

After all, sentiment rules the world. Perhaps for the first time, Tilden was seized with a real desire to snatch her from the grave and stand her before the world—a monument to himself?— No, to Jim and to the crew! The figures he now saw aloft furling sail should not strip her of her trappings and leave her bones to bleach. Silhouetted against the warm golden glow of the late sun, everything from her royals high to her graceful clipper line, moved him deeply.

For the first time his heart beat with Jim's, Sturgis' and the crew's. He lost the impression that he was being gently coerced, pressed into a distasteful task for dollars. He knew now it was because he loved the little Princess Ann, and the ship *Princess Ann,* beautiful too, as he now saw her. She must carry the little one back to her own country. From the smouldering fire of repressed desires, the flames broke out and warmed his being. He was so deeply moved that in his heart he silently thanked his Maker for life, health, and the power to be useful.

As he mounted the ladder and made for the cabin, his body and step were once more sturdy and elastic.

"The man who exclaimed: 'Know thyself!' was

a stupid ass!" he exclaimed half aloud. "Better acknowledge how little you will ever know of yourself—or any one, or anything, and be governed by fundamentals."

As he expected, as soon as they were seated for the evening meal, Jim told him that the very low tide had enabled them to dig and free the rudder. They had found it uninjured and they had overhauled its gear. Tilden was silent, but keenly interested.

Every sail had been set. They were of unusual quality, and free from patches. In overhauling the extras or spares, they found several new, unusually heavy storm mainsails. Thinking it trivial, Jim did not tell the Captain of something else that later proved immensely important.

How the saying "Curiosity killed a cat" became current, is hard to understand, as felines are seldom curious, but many other animals are, through this characteristic, led to the hunter's bag. Curiosity sent "Peeping Tom" to jail, and has landed eavesdroppers and many others into trouble. Jim and Sturgis were among the others.

After getting through with the steering gear, the very low tide suggested to both Jim and Sturgis the possibility of digging down to see how the patch in the hull looked on the outside. By banking the mud, forming a ditch, and using the pump on small

seepage, in a short time they had it exposed to clear view. When some rough places were chipped off and some depressions filled, they were delighted.

"Now if we let clear water into this ditch against the concrete, we'll soon know whether our work's all for nothing!" declared Sturgis.

Jim nodded. With one stroke of the shovel he broke the dyke around the side of the vessel and let the water in against the patch. Had either of them been schooled in hydraulics, they would have at least consulted Captain Tilden, who somehow sensitized to approaching crisis, felt one now impending. Jim did not understand why the Captain was so reserved and little inclined to talk. Tilden himself did not understand it, nor why that night he left the deck earlier than usual to turn in.

Before doing so, he looked at the barometer—perhaps through mere force of habit. It indicated violent change. If the ship had not been solidly imbedded in the mud for six months, thorough and cautious preparation against accident was called for. Far away, but seemingly rising astern, were heavy clouds, and the then deathly still humid atmosphere explained the falling mercury. This portended more than the usual thunder storm of the region, the Captain felt. Coming towards them directly astern, was a yeasty mountain of blue black that from within, here and there expelled a light,

swiftly moving vapor, all rendered infernally lurid by jagged strips of arching electricity that appeared to reply to a vicious attack of a mighty enemy hidden elsewhere in the universe.

"Plenty of fresh water in about an hour," was the Captain's muttered exclamation. But that did not explain his mental depression that evening, which had appeared to Jim as a sort of a grouch.

"It's the weather, I guess," the Captain said to himself, reflecting his own mood. "This storm will clear one atmosphere and I'll escape the other by going to sleep,"—but this was not to be.

In less than an hour he was shocked from profound sleep into instant wakefulness. The cause was so slight that a landsman would not have noticed it at all, but to him it was as the voice of thunder, the impact of express trains moving head on. Though instantly alert in mind, his body waited inert for the second evidence of the crisis. It was perhaps the great crisis of his life, and so far, of Jim's also.

When he felt it again he exhibited most astonishing activity. Like the beetle which without legs, amazes one by its power of locomotion, he bounded from the bed, appearing on deck in his sleeping clothes and began shouting orders. The ship had moved in its bed of mud! The tide at full flood and the terrific gale full astern preceding a downpour,

was the cause. An instant's delay might be fatal. Once loose, she would swing on her chains to rocks on one side, or into enveloping soft mud on the other. In either case, the *Princess Ann* would be a complete wreck and all their work on her would be wasted.

His first order for all hands on deck, though apparently unhurried, galvanized every hand and leg on board into instant action. Even though the wind was carrying heavy spray upon the stern and whined shrilly at the resistance of shroud and stay, the command would have been heard twice the length of the vessel without losing power. Every one of the infinite gradations of the human voice disappeared from his except an irresistible power to electrify men into action and to multiply their speed and strength. There was no hesitation. The problem had been solved subconsciously. He knew he was doing the only thing to be done.

As he expected, Jim was first to come up. He asked him to take the wheel. Then there was thundered towards the forecastle an order to slip the cable of the starboard anchor and man the capstan and hove in the port anchor. All other hands aloft to make sail.

All that could be heard above the storm was the great metal dog of the capstan clanking in the ratchet with twice the usual speed and the sailors

aloft cursing because they did not have four hands —two to hold on with, and two with which to work.

They did not know why they were straining every muscle to the utmost. All they knew, all they wanted to know, was that the Captain himself was on deck giving orders. The lightning blinded them and the thunder claps of the utmost frequency and intensity made it seem that the granite Andes towering miles above them, had given way, and that the Continent had parted so that ocean might greet ocean nearer than Cape Horn.

The Captain felt sure that, as the ship had broken the sucking hold of the mud, the moment the detaining port anchor was clear, the mainsails now bellying tight as fiddle strings, would make the *Princess Ann* rise, bounding with life, from what was to have been her deathbed. When she did slip off with a grinding noise, she answered the helm instantly, gloriously. "Free—free!"—her shouting was heard above the storm, even to the stars.

Captain Tilden thanked God for the frequent flashes of vivid lightning which enabled him to trace the outlines of the city above and the thin spar buoys of the channel, and some of the marks he had little more than casually noted on the chart.

Before him was the herculean task of taking a fifteen hundred ton sailing ship through a tortuous

way affording scarcely room enough to maneuver a yacht. Without foot or head covering, clad only in his two-piece sleeping garment, back and forth before the wheel he walked, nor did he feel the pouring torrents. He wanted to be sure about the tide—had it turned? The storm was rushing them along now. If his whole life yielded but the performance of this one magnificent feat of navigation, it would be enough.

Jim at the wheel seemed to anticipate his orders. So complete was the domination of the Captain's will over him at the moment that it controlled his body without need of utterance. Though he heard them, the verbal orders were scarcely necessary. They both wondered if their cement patchwork was sufficiently seasoned to stand the strain. Would this fierce strain upon the mizzen top cause it to spring enough—crack it? If so—well, anxiety now would not help.

They were racing toward the open water and were approaching the light buoy which the Captain had noted as marking an abrupt change in their course. Jim somehow knew he would get an order to "Starboard the helm—hard over," and that it must go "hard" on the instant, unless something parted.

The Captain was standing well over to starboard and rooted to the deck even as one of the great

masts, watching the light buoy which was dim and at times obscured by the heavy downpour, windlashed into dense mist. During a flash of lightning he gave Jim a warning look.

He was not excited. The men jumped to obey the order that came with the shifting helm and were so stirred they heeded not their already blistered hands. They would have obeyed if it stripped the flesh bare to the bone.

The Captain appeared even stoical when they cleared the light buoy by only half their beam and then successfully squared away into the open harbor. He did not get excited until after he had performed the impossible and they were anchored in the roadstead; then he was ready to throw the cook overboard because the latter, overcome at their good luck, had spilled a whole pot of food on the galley stove.

Soon, however, he relaxed and even though they told him she was taking water through the cement patching, he went back to bed and to sleep.

CHAPTER XX

WHETHER it was a sort of daze from mighty effort, indifference to plaudits, or confidence in Jim, even Tilden himself could not tell; anyhow he remained in his room until Jim rapped on his door shortly after daylight. He was promptly bidden to enter.

Captain Tilden did not turn over; instead he turned his head on its ball-and-socket joint, his bright inquiring face gazing at Jim, who stood just inside the door with his hand on the knob.

"Captain Tilden, the water we were taking last night was through an old deadlight opened while working on the after compartment break. When under way it came awash. The concrete repair work is intact and does not leak."

"None?"

"Not a drop!" Jim answered. "A tug and pilot has signaled us thinking we are just arriving in port."

"Where's the wind?" the Captain inquired exultingly.

"Off shore, fresh southwest—instrument fair.

The crew has been throwing the mud overboard all night; it's pretty well out now."

"How are we provisioned?"

"Good for about a week."

"Jim, after breakfast we'll make sail. I will put her through for a day. If she don't open or show too bad, we'll clear for the top of the world —some place on the map, Jim!"

Jim had just left him and returned to the deck when a launch came alongside. Recognizing one of the shipping agents to whom the *Durland* was consigned, Jim lowered a ladder.

When that shipping agent left, Jim went in to breakfast thinking hard. Captain Tilden was examining a coast chart in the middle of which sat the tiny Princess Ann—still more than ever, the biggest thing on the ship. Perhaps for that reason she occupied their attention at breakfast; besides, there was really nothing to plan until they were sure the old East Indian would not show a leak through the immense concrete patch in her side, when under strain of sail.

When they returned that night to the same anchorage, she had been "put through." Again and again the Captain had tried every expedient known to the astute Ship Master to develop weakness in hull and gear.

The Captain who had been silent all day, broke

out in high spirits when they were finally seated at dinner.

"Jim, how much water are you taking aft now?"

Jim's answer was a smile that both puzzled and pleased.

"Not a bit as far as we can tell. The men not needed to work the ship have been trying to remove mud, but could not do much. Sturgis says that when you did not have her on beam's end, you had her by the heels headed for Davy Jones."

"Eh, boy—it's over five thousand miles to 'Frisco—too far to sail in a coffin—but she's speedy and safe enough if your patch doesn't fall out or turn sieve."

"Our patch holds now—it'll get stronger for fifteen days. It's comparatively soft now, and not budging to-day, it'll never move, even with cargo."

"I'll go ashore early to-morrow and clear for 'Frisco. We can call at Callao for provisions—"

"Captain, wouldn't she sail better with some ballast forward?"

"Eh—yes—but why pay for ballast?"

"Why not try to get some freight?"

"Jim, I believe you are a lineal descendant of Midas. You would have everything turn to gold—but you know what happened? He finally got ass's ears. Would you rob the sea of its dead and then put the corpse to work?"

"Why couldn't we take enough freight in the two forward holds to steady her—and—and pay expenses?" Jim steadily persisted.

"There you go. I believe your ears have already begun to grow. Who would give us freight without insurance—and what company would be imbecile enough to insure—?"

Jim laughed. He had somehow learned that was the safest way to interrupt Tilden.

"I am doubtful about insurance, though I'm told Mr. Fortesque is expected back; he's interested in a way and may suggest something. The mud will be all out by to-morrow morning and everything washed out. I am told cargo space all along this coast is so scarce, shippers will take the risk themselves."

"More power to you, Jim."

"We are at least a month from San Francisco. The crew's wages are on you, now; and provisions—"

"I know—it's big."

"Crew and all have been, and are working because of Princess Ann—and if they will give us freight without insurance, why shouldn't we take it?"

"All right, you try it. I'll give you a day to shake it out, and bear this in mind: this war is going to be over some time and when it is, sailing craft and everything belonging to it, will be worth

as much as a nice assortment of snow shovels at the Equator!"

"You mean the *Princess Ann*—we must change this vessel for a steamer?" Jim asked the Captain with elevated brows as they both left the table.

"Dreamstuff, Jim."

"Dreams—that is, the right kind of dreams—can come true 'if we hustle while we wait.'"

Jim started to hustle that very day. He went ashore that night and soon had rival shipping agents making bids for their cargo space with and without insurance.

Mr. Fortesque had returned from Buenos Aires. He promised Jim to see him the next morning. It was early when he came aboard. He looked about as one appraising a man pronounced dead by competent authority, but who had arisen, walked away and laughed at the undertaker. He applied rule and tape line to the concrete patch.

"Ah—er—I say, Captain—I think this is very clever," he began, when the survey was finally completed and Jim had brought him to the Captain, who at the moment of their entrance was tickling Princess Ann's toes. Tilden sobered instantly. Fortesque was the one man he wanted badly to see—he owed him the equivalent of two hundred pounds sterling. His survey was important—Jim knew that, of course.

"Ah—er—the little Princess Ann seems to be well," Fortesque continued, absently taking a chair and staring at the child.

"Biggest thing on the high seas, Mr. Fortesque," said the Captain—the child was trying to span his thumb.

"Er—ah—Captain, I should say—I do say, you have done remarkable habilitating—"

"Not me—I've only looked on, and a doubting Thomas at that, too. The Mate, here, and the crew—"

"Ah—liberal, I should say—big of you, but we logically ask who is responsible for the morale of the crew?"

"As a matter of fact I have done nothing except yesterday, when I did my best to open her up," insisted Captain Tilden testily.

"Ah—I daresay getting her out into deep water was a contributing factor?"

"Oh, well—yes, but I believe the real force was this third of a hundredweight—"

"She helped, I daresay. No, Captain, you can't escape credit," interrupted the underwriter, looking full at Jim who had assumed a waiting attitude back of the Captain's chair; "but I must tell you that I frown on the proposal of the ship brokers here to give you a full cargo of nitrate for the other side, though it appears unusually profitable—a gold

mine apparently.— The fact is, that you should not —no, wait—I'll put it this way: I don't want you to go into the zone at all." Still looking at Jim, he continued: "Yes, I know the *Durland's* owner had a rare chance. I—I may be permitted to tell you she was lost—went down—with all hands too. Now, if you will allow me—that is, I feel bound to suggest that you pick up all odd freight here for up coast. There's a few hundred tons, I am told, for Callao and nearer."

The Captain was about to explode the information that he had not been offered a cargo of nitrate, when he looked at Jim.

"At Callao I happen to know you can get a cargo of sugar for Delaware Breakwater, or New York. Now if you do this, I can—I will manage it that both hull and cargo are covered up coast and for transit through the canal, with cargo from Callao. You see, American coasting insurance is easier than deep sea."

"Well then,"—here the Captain moved enough to see Jim over his shoulder—"as I understand it, you are willing to take her coasting, but won't insure her for deep water?"

"Ah—er—I wouldn't put it that way—if—if she once carries cargo coastwise—"

"Eh, Mr. Fortesque, I'm glad you'll take her coastwise; as you say, after she stands cargo strain

—but I have done enough yesterday to open the best of 'em."

"Ah—I know—I know the big money for crossing appeals. There's been a change—they won't buy now as they did the *Durland,* to get the cargo, and you must take your chance. To demonstrate—assuming you got across with such a cargo, it will be seized, requisitioned—they call it—but it's about the same. As yet they have established no regular way of paying for cargoes so taken. Perhaps, in fact, I know they will pay eventually, but only after long delays—delicate questions for the State Department. You—you would be there in a bottom of British registry as an American owner; and I assume your first officer, here"—looking full at Jim —"is still without license. You can't afford—"

Fortesque then contemplated the Captain and finally the child. He usually referred to her as the "Little One."

"No," he went on triumphantly, "I feel bound to suggest—urge so strongly that the big figures will make no impression. Take cargo to a north States port from Callao and sell the vessel for junk, if need be. I'll gamble just now they'll snap her up to carry cargo. Anything that floats. There'll be a slump in shipping—a big one, with the last gun—get from under. I'm making it strong so you will not rise to the other lure."

Jim proved a good listener, while the Captain seemed fascinated by the isolated, upstanding wisp of hair in front, and the unusually prominent nose of the talker. Though profoundly impressed, he finally found his voice as they arose:

"Mr. Fortesque, you must be right—you have inside information—besides, you are interested. For my part I'm glad you think I can get to a decent boneyard and be sure to pay you."

"Er—Captain—that matter can wait. My itinerary soon takes me north—hope to see you—ship, crew and cargo there—the States I mean." Hat in hand, he started for the deck watching the Captain tuck the Princess under his arm—then glance an invitation for Jim to follow.

"What a wonderful view of the Andes you have from here—such magnificent shades of blue and gray. The villages far up there look no more than white dots in the stupendous picture that reaches from horizon to horizon. The man, Bates,—your former Mate, Captain—most mischievous person—is keeping his promise to stay clear of the sea and the underwriters are glad."

"Bates is a bad egg," assented Captain Tilden.

"But at about the end of his tether," Fortesque remarked, moving toward the ladder to where his launch waited. "Ah—er—Captain, perhaps I should mention—a shipbuilding concern—friends, or at

least people with whom we have pleasant relations, laid a keel—something like twenty thousand dead-weight—asked me to suggest a name. I was at that moment adjusting a loss on a big steamer that sank off New York Harbor—the *Princess Ann.* They have christened the new one *Princess Ann,* and—er—will soon be ready. I took the liberty of suggesting, in fact urging, that they try to get you to take her as Master—you may hear from them."

"Thank you, Mr. Fortesque, for the trouble—"

"No trouble—ah—er, a pleasure," he drawled, while briskly shaking hands and making his departure.

When he was a cable's length away he turned about and waved a parting salute.

The Captain carried the Princess into the cabin. Jim called to Sturgis:

"Hoist a signal for a tug to take us to the wharf." Their policy and destination were settled and that was about all that the Captain seemed interested in, except the child.

Jim did the leg work. He arranged for the freight, named the rate, gave receipts and generally superintended things while Sturgis managed it at the ship's side, and stowed it.

It was the same when they, though one-third short-handed, arrived at Callao in about a fortnight. Jim was mostly responsible for Tilden assuming the

attitude of an expert navigator whose vitality and energy was to be conserved for that purpose only, who in no case was to be harried with details. Jim collected the freight, gave the receipts for, and turned the money over to him for the strong box into which he placed it, making no pretense of keeping a record. He expected Jim to do that.

They had just discharged the partial cargo and were anchored well out in the harbor when Captain Tilden was astonished and amused to learn of a wrangle between Jim and the shipping agents. As Fortesque predicted, a full cargo of raw sugar was promptly offered. The Captain cautiously refused to listen to details when they came to him; he sent them back to Jim. He knew something of the wily Peruvian Customs House Broker. His confidence in the boy had grown until it now amounted to deep affection, and he realized that he would side with him whatever position he took. He waited until meal time to ask him about it, little thinking it would be their first controversy.

"Eh—Jim, you're spoiling it—they will unite and agree not to give us cargo at all under such circumstances. Your conditions are so unusual—never heard of it in shipping."

"Captain, it is new, perhaps unheard of, but as I once said about all the things happening now over

the world, are entirely new. These fellows are sharp, cunning traders. Two banks are in it and they are presuming on our ignorance of the sugar market, but I have learned that the price of sugar has advanced enormously. On the dock here, with no ships to carry it, it is worth two or three cents per pound, but in New York or London—seventeen or eighteen. We are the only bottom in sight. They've got to submit to our terms and pay freight in advance!"

"Eh—boy, you are a corkscrew for getting at information."

"Have you considered the heavy canal tolls?" Jim countered.

"Haven't we got enough to pay them?"

"Yes, but what about the crew when we arrive? They will have about two months' wages due when we anchor. They have been true blue and must have it then—not after we collect the freight. These people talk of the Delaware Breakwater now, but insist on thirty days, with demurrage to divert to any other American port—it is the rankest sort of speculation. The cargo may be sold a half a dozen times before we arrive. No, Captain, it's money down as soon as the hatches close. You see if anything happens, they have the insurance to fall back on, but where would we be with this crew waiting

for wages until insurance is adjusted?—Or suppose the war would end and the market break, this sugar might not be worth our freight—"

"Eh, Jim, you're right. What rate have you made them? They have been whining to me about the rate; I didn't say much about it because I didn't know what you were asking."

"Well, Captain, I'll tell you." Here Jim hesitated a moment, then went to his room and brought out the Princess Ann, who blinked in the sudden light. He put her in the chariot and pulled it alongside between them, straightening the tiny growth of hair a bit, as he often did, with the tips of his fingers, the while smiling at the babe.

"Now about the rate," he began, resuming his seat and scanning the Captain's face, "I'll admit jockeying some for position; I had to, to meet those speculating rogues. I first named one hundred and twenty-five dollars, but finally settled back at a hundred, and that's where I stick."

"I—I—Jim, I don't quite understand; what do you mean by a hundred?"

"Captain, I mean five cents a pound—a hundred dollars in gold for each short ton we burden for New York or an equivalent port," bluntly, decisively, Jim replied.

"Jim!—you mean fifteen hundred tons at one hundred dollars per ton?"

"Eighteen hundred short tons—Sturgis says," Jim corrected as if to further aggravate the Captain's brainstorm.

Captain Tilden laid down his knife and fork, wiped his mouth vigorously with the napkin and shoved back from the unfinished food. His neck seemed to settle between his shoulders; then like a bird of prey, his head turned, pointing the eagle-like nose towards the window. He decided to wait a bit; to be forceful he must not be heated. To gain control of his wrath, he must momentarily think of something else.

The tide setting north through the treacherous channel Boqueron between the whaleback shoals and the Island of San Lorenzo, brought the ship up on a taut cable so that he could see the entire island. His eyes traveled from the lighthouse on the northland cape to a white wall that enclosed a road to a small factory up on the side, near which was a house—a faded blue in the distance. Further on was a yellow one, but the mid-day summer sun only twelve degrees from the equator, seemed to have consumed everything green on the island except a strip near the beach, indicated by a greenish tint only.

The Captain was astonished to find his mind could be diverted by the white-washed fishing huts further on, which appeared like scattered giant seabirds'

eggs at the foot of an extinct crater that mounted a thousand feet into the azure of the cloudless sky.

Off the water he could not find existence livable. His head, marionette-like, came back far enough to see Jim, who was apparently unperturbed—gazing out of the port window of the salon. He could see the great floating dock and the Customs House thereon, where he knew eighteen hundred tons of choice raw sugar had recently been moved for them. He could see the veritable graveyard for ships to the southward of the mouth of the Rimac River. He could see the point some five miles away, where the capital city, Lima, had with a grimace, squeezed itself in between the towering Cristobel and Bartolomae mountain peaks.

It was the child's voice that broke the silence, and as usual, saved the situation. She had apparently decided to clean house, and began by throwing a varied colored globe, a rubber doll and a rattle off her lap with much jumping, crooning and waving.

The Captain felt he now had a firm hold on himself. Releasing his arms, he hitched his chair back towards the table.

"I tell you, Jim, the principle's wrong—no good can come of it. The gold will turn into a rotten stone in our hands; will be a Nemesis that will pursue us to the end of the earth. Ten dollars a ton

is enough; I have taken lots of sugar out of this harbor for five—and was glad to get it!"

"Captain," began Jim, somewhat softened, "you can recall leaving the matter of getting a burden to me. I—I think I understand—I see your point. I likely have erred in not giving you more details. Now this is no ordinary case of the planter-producer sending his sugar to market through a Customs House broker to get the market price. It has grown far beyond that—to what is even an enormous transaction for the banks here who are engineering it.—

"The planter has got his little dot—perhaps one and a half cents a pound—for his sugar, and has returned to the valley to eat pig meat, chila tortias, and wonder if he will ever get out of debt. The ultimate consumer is, as usual, going to pay," continued Jim, speaking slowly and looking fully at the Captain across the table. "We cannot help him if we carry it to New York, freight free; he is now between the speculative millstones to be ground fine; the bank speculators are in the saddle and are riding rough. The question is, how much of the speculator's margin are we going to demand for furnishing the basic necessity for profit of any sort? —I think a third—one hundred a ton—is a fair and equitable price for us!"

Captain Tilden shook his head slowly.

"Too much, Jim—they'll make trouble somehow. Why, this ship when she was new didn't cost a hundred dollars per ton deadweight!"

The Captain's tremendous personality was telling on the youth. He had met his first onslaught but he now began to weaken with the reaction. His reply had a fagged, even a sad note, but contained nothing of concession.

"I don't see how that has anything to do with it. Do you suppose Mr. Fortesque did not know the conditions when he said: 'Go to Callao?'— He is the one man whose fingers are on the pulse of the world, and who means much more than he says. Do you think he intended you to pass up a chance he has put in your way, because of a scruple based on tradition?—Captain, your generosity, bravery and probity—and I might say, bigness—are wonderful, but you are amiss in a certain perception of the main chance. Can't you see?" continued Jim in a lowered tone—"that Mr. Fortesque is somehow interested in this child, and perhaps for her, is showing you good things—throwing things your way?" he added.

Captain Tilden arose and walked to the port window. His eyes traveled over the waters of the harbor past the wreck of the floating dock, over the fort and up the river valley that disappears between the mountains where the tropical verdure becomes

an entrancing blue warmed with green tints, where his vision was then plunged into the abysmal azure vault beyond.

He started for his room but stopped when opposite the chariot and child and voiced his thought:

"He's not throwing things in my way, Jim—it's in our way!"

CHAPTER XXI

After they berthed at the Customs House dock, Captain Tilden watched three-hundred-pound bags of raw sugar bear the load line of the old East Indian down—more than ten thousand of them. He observed everything closely but not as something that he was vitally interested in for himself; more and more it grew on him that he was doing this for others—the Princess, Jim, and the crew. He now was the Navigator freed from annoying, distracting business details.

Frequent short torrential showers slowed up the work. After them came the sun, scorching hot. Sugar, sifting from the bags, became molasses. Sticky and malodorous as a black strap tanker was the ship until she was loaded and washed down and shifted again into the stream.

The Captain was troubled at times with misgivings and doubt and would then even resent the influence of the child on his life and movements. He felt deprived of a certain prized liberty of action and thought. Of course Jim came in for a share of this mental flogging. As accomplice, accessory, the boy seemed lately to take pleasure in push-

ing or pulling him into distasteful situations. That he could not, or at least did not, resist Jim with any vigor, was to him astonishingly depressing.

But after such rebellious moments it would come back to him, each time with added force, that only a few months ago it had required a friend's—Captain Blount's—encouragement to dissipate self-pity and keep him out of the sea's permanent discard. He could trace his new manhood directly to the influence of the child and Jim. He had grown to think of them as in some way belonging to him.

He was alternately hot and cold while the loading went on; this feeling lasted even after it was finished and Jim had collected the freight in advance, just as he had said he would. And such a lot of money—more gold than he and Jim could carry at one time. It was finally carted to the Express Office after its disposition had been discussed.

"Captain, do you think it best to bring it aboard?" Jim asked, after such a plan was announced.

"Eh, why not, Jim? If the ship goes down, maybe we won't need it. Can't it go with us in the boats if we do abandon the ship?" Smiling incredulously he continued, chaffingly: "Maybe our strong box that's big enough for a bank won't hold it?"

"Well, it's considerable weight," Jim smiled. "Both you and I together cannot carry it easily.

If you shipped it by express to New York, retaining enough for tolls, provisions and the crew, wouldn't you feel easier if difficulties arose?"

"But, Jim, why should we expect difficulties?"

They were at the noonday meal. Captain Tilden looked across at the boy wondering why of late an unwillingness to agree with him, seemed to be an obsession. In spite of the fact that it was unbearably warm, the boy sat there neat and upright with a certain undefinable poise. The light as it fell on his thick, inky hair, at that moment suggested a portrait of a clear-cut, wistful, enigmatic face, framed by the mahogany paneling of the salon behind him. The picture had a strange allure.

But this continued unaccountable and unreasonable opposition on the Captain's part had made Jim most cautious, even as to the manner in which he voiced the slightest suggestion.

"Why, Captain, I was thinking only of the ordinary perils of the sea that make insurance on the best ships necessary."

"Um—yes, maybe you're right—but who—"

"Ship it yourself, care of some one. You have often spoken of Captain Blount. Write a letter to him to go with it, telling him what you want done if anything should happen."

"A good idea, Jim; now I can see—a good idea. I'll write the letter now, then you can go ashore

and express it. We are cleared now ready to cast off as soon as your return."

Even after he began to write, he stopped to wonder why he resented a suggestion that now appeared plainly as ordinary prudence; a necessity to protect Jim's interest and the crew's—he was now only custodian, trustee, as it were, for them. He was becoming dependent; too much so. Then it occurred to him that this letter was in the nature of a testament; in fact, it was a will disposing of a lot of money—for all he possessed when he had left Mobile had been debts. He knew that Captain Blount, retired sea captain, would regard both the letter and spirit of his request, if for any reason he did not return, as a sacred trust.

It took him some time to write the letter. He provided for the crew's interest first; then for James Conroy, and the child, Princess Ann. He smiled as this was the first time his feeling toward them had to be concretely expressed. He was himself surprised at the form it took when he put it down. Somehow instead of the feeling of depression he had of late, he was relieved—even exhilarated.

"Here is the letter, King Midas."

"All right, 'Old Hickory,' " laughed Jim over his shoulder, hurrying away.

Without knowing it, Captain Tilden relied much

on premonitions which were in most part reliable, but he had said to himself many times that Satans could under certain circumstances, insinuate themselves between him and his soul's guardians for brief periods. At these moments he was not wholly sane. Except at such times, Jim and the child filled his world. Intuitively he knew of the deception that Jim had been asked by Mr. Fortesque to practice upon him for a brief time, and which prevented Jim from freely discussing the theory of how Fortesque came to be so much interested in little Princess Ann.

During the Captain's periodic depressions he would think of Bates. He had been told that Bates had been cashiered off the sea, but he knew the sea had much coast upon which he could play the devil. It was possible that they would cross each other's paths again.

Jim had not changed; he perhaps worked harder. They were working a fully laden ship with exactly two-thirds as many men as the Englishman regarded a full crew, and were getting speed. Being short-handed, either Captain Tilden or Jim had to be on deck. They now seldom ate together and met only when relieving each other.

Some fifteen days from Callao they had crossed the Equator and were in the southeast trades sailing a direct course for the Canal. With little warning,

a thought struck Captain Tilden and bowled him over as a ship borne down by a hurricane on the full quarter. Jim was on watch. He had eaten alone and was then sitting at the desk waiting for mid-day when he would go up on deck and relieve the Mate. Rummaging for some trifle he happened upon the express receipt. Tilden knew nothing of why his thumb and forefinger tightened as a vise upon the piece of heavy paper. His vision bore down on it as the staccato of hailstones which in that latitude fell on the deck as though dashed from a bucket out of clear sunlight.

The large, plainly written figures on the paper that meant so many dollars in gold delivered and awaiting his order in New York, at first seemed fictitious. No, they were real; Jim had told him so; besides, a small portion of the metal was in the strong box for tolls and the men's wages.

Bates seemed able to appear at his elbow filling him with vile suspicion. While he could point to no overt act on the part of Jim, the receipt for the gold filled him with distrust. In fact, Jim's record and conduct was so faultless and efficient that he now seemed unreal—mysterious. So much gold seemed ample evidence of something wrong. The damned stuff would turn to ashes as he had predicted.

"If there is nothing wrong with Jim, he is not

human!" he muttered, but continued as reason asserted itself: "Whatever mystery surrounds him, he has earned my loyalty; self-interest may have prompted the suggestion of the letter disposing of the gold in the event of serious casualty—but apparently he had no interest in its division—and it would have been easy for him to have stipulated for his share at the time."

Having thus concluded, Tilden lunged from his chair as though he would dismember the silent specter of Bates or whatever spirit had prompted the suspicions he had been momentarily fostering. His bronzed face still showed the flush of shame when he went to relieve Jim, who greeted him as usual.

"Captain, you look as though you aren't rested. I have just worked out our position; if I'm right, we've made a good run. Will you verify my calculations?" Jim asked, offering him the sextant.

"Away with it, Jim!" The Captain seemed relieved at finding voice. "It's effort wasted; you are as good a navigator now as I am." Then he went to the chariot and kissed the wide-awake Princess on the cheek.

"I hope so, Captain. I'll need to be pretty good to stand the grilling I've got ahead of me to get my license."

"Eh, boy, don't lose any sleep over it. If you

had the length of sea service, I think you could pass for Master now. I'm going to talk to Blount when we get back to New York—maybe he can get them to waive—"

"We are a long way from there now. After we're through the Canal, as I understand it, beating out of the Caribbean and up the Atlantic is rather stiff this time of year?"

"Not so bad, Jim. We hit the Gulf Stream off Cuba; that alone gives over three knots headway."

Of course he could not know then that they would not go up the Atlantic, or any coast, with this ship, *Princess Ann.*

To the whole crew, Captain Tilden and the Mate were only the medium through which the real Master of the vessel worked. She it was who charmed the "trades" to reach south for them; banished the doldrums and sent them bowling across the latitudes where sailing ships, as vegetation deprived of water, often lay for lifeless days—the Princess Ann, infant sorceress, beneficent mascot for the ship *Princess Ann,* sugar laden for New York.

They had barely gotten into the first Miraflores Lock when the message together with some mail, was delivered. It was then late in the evening and they had been promised complete canal transit during the night. There Sturgis could take charge, relieving both Captain Tilden and Jim. It was the

first time that the Captain and the Mate had dined together since leaving Callao.

The little Princess was in full evening dress, suitable for ten degrees north of the Equator, swing seated alongside the table.

"Eh, Jim; we're playing lucky; it's just as you said; they have been playing battledore and shuttlecock with our cargo and it's finally lodged in New Orleans. Jim, eight or ten days saved by going into the big brook."

"Winter weather on the Gulf yet?" Jim casually asked.

"Oh, yes, but no more teeth than Hatteras."

"But, Captain, our charter plainly calls for Delaware Breakwater or equivalent port. I recall it as I wrote it. New Orleans is not an equivalent—won't there be difficulties?"

"Yes, but none that cannot be arranged with the Peruvian Consul. Jim, you don't seem to warm up. I thought you originated in the South and—"

"Yes, I do—in one way I'm glad," Jim replied, but listlessly. "However, you seem to forget that you have a ship for sale and that New York is the place to sell it."

"It's just as you say—New Orleans is not an equivalent. Towage, bar and river pilotage both ways; over a hundred miles from the Gulf to New Orleans—they must agree to pay. If they do, we'll

be compelled to go there. If they don't, we'll show up according to the writing at the Breakwater and ask their pleasure. In six hours if they don't wire the guarantee, we'll break for the Gulf Stream and steer so far to the eastward that Cape Hatteras won't know we're around."

Jim looked at the Princess and continued eating. Again the Captain voiced his thoughts:

"Jim, isn't it strange that we've had no sickness? We're leaving the Equator for cool weather with every man Jack eating regular meals and isn't it wonderful how the Princess has grown? She is as plump as a minnow and got three teeth with more coming."

Captain Tilden laid down his fork as if that were a necessary preliminary to surveying the pink velvety torso of the child bared from the waist, her plump, chubby legs emerging from the snowy white waistband.

"Jim, I was thinking the other day when we were loading at Callao that our cultured ladies borrow from the female torrid zone aborigines the custom of dressing principally the pelvic region, but deny us men the breech cloth of the male of the same zone. I don't think that we men get a square deal in hot weather, do you?" Captain Tilden waited as if for comment, but as Jim said nothing, he persisted: "Jim, what I mean is that hotel dining rooms may be

filled with ladies exposed down to the waist where a gasket starts shoulderwise to support a bit of gauze—yet a man's suspenders start a gasp of horror!"

"Oh, I don't know," began Jim coldly. "It's wholly a matter of appeal; each sex tries equally hard," he continued, glancing at the Captain. "A purposed viewed broadly is laudable enough."

"Then you think it's putting the best foot forward and not utility that causes them to copy more and more the hip covering of their forest sisters?"

"Why couldn't it be both?" Then quickly: "How long is it from here to New Orleans?"

"Twelve—fifteen days, with average weather."

"And New York?"

"About ten degrees further east—the same north; perhaps a week or ten days longer." The Captain pushed away from the table and produced his pipe.

"Jim, I don't recall seeing you smoke—don't you like it?"

Jim darted a glance at the now complacent Captain who was looking out at the Lock.

"No; I tried to, but it didn't take."

"Jim, Fortesque must travel by airship. He is back in the States, and writes me from there. It seems he's not through yet with Bates. He wants a general statement from me and one from Sturgis

about the incident on the first voyage in the *Durland* when Bates attacked you while shaving."

"Yes?" Jim's voice was dejected. "I'm almost inclined to wish Bates in Hell!" said he savagely.

CHAPTER XXII

THE full rigged ship *Princess Ann,* sugar laden, Callao to Delaware Breakwater, was not out of the Gatun Lock the next morning, when Tilden, her Master, received by wireless a confirmation of the change in destination and a satisfactory guarantee for the additional cost of taking a sailing ship to the port of New Orleans.

To almost any other Captain, and any other crew, the "Double reef" weather encountered as they left the Caribbean and entered the Gulf, would have been the cause of sober thought. As it was, the crew laughed and jested in rollicking holiday spirits when they obeyed the order to prepare the boats. They knew all about the ship and believed, as they put it, that the weakest spot was the patch, and that she was stronger now than the day she was launched, after being repaired.

They smiled and nodded approbation of the "Old Man's nerve" when the royal, ordered out too soon, went to shreds; was replaced at once, and a little later the skysail broke over it and stayed. In fact, everything that aided speed, stayed. It was this skysail that the lookout on the pilot tower

at the foot of the south pass of the Mississippi first saw. Then a tug that had been waiting under full head forty-eight hours with a bar pilot aboard, rushed out past the famous Eads Jettys and plunged into the enormous seas then rushing in from the Gulf to the River's mouth, discolored and defiled by the vari-colored silt and soil washings gathered by this water course in its majestic sweep down from the Great Lake regions.

The Dry Tortugas Station had reported a ship resembling the *Princess Ann* passing there. Her sugar cargo being badly wanted, the tug was sent to wait for them all alert. It was not until the tug's hawser was made fast, and the Bar Pilot in command of the vessel, that Captain Tilden realized of a certainty that there was something wrong with Jim.

The racking strain of bringing a fully laden sailing ship, one-third short-handed, from Colon to the mouth of the Mississippi in ten days, was his first explanation of the boy's trouble.

Tilden came into the salon and found Jim sitting in his chair at the table reading the daily paper that the Bar Pilot, T. A. Wilson, had brought aboard—the first American paper of recent date that they had seen for some four months.

"Eh, Jim, you must need rest, you look so done up. Better eat dinner and go to bed. The Pilot

tells me he is doubtful about reaching quarantine before sundown. That means we must anchor until sunrise to-morrow, for the quarantine Doctors."

"Doctors—quarantine—why—why, what do we have to do with quarantine?" Jim asked, his voice weak.

"Clearing from a foreign port calls for quarantine inspection, Jim," the Captain replied.

The tug and pilot had jockied the big ship into just the right position to clear the end of the jetty by a few feet, breasting the treacherous current there exactly right to avoid being thrust onto the graveyard immediately across the narrowed mouth of the river. This brought the reddish late afternoon sun athwartship through the salon window so that it fell on Jim's face. He sat leaning back in the armchair, with his legs extended under the table, the paper in both hands. The rear profile view of his First Mate frightened Tilden.

His charcoal hair was lusterless, long and uncombed. His eyes sunken and dull. The rays of the sun as it fell directly on his face for a few moments, made his skin appear sallow, lacking care and nourishment.

The Captain was conscious-stricken. Jim tossed the paper away, and went forward. Soon, in nervous haste he returned to the chair and "Daily."

"The last two weeks have been stiff; he has done too much," thought Tilden. He then suddenly recalled how in telling his story, Jim had plainly warned him that he was making important reservations. He now wondered if this had anything to do with his Mate's mood.

The Captain, who stood in the entrance of the cabin, here turned to watch the ship which was approaching the end of the jetty so nearly head on, that her long jibboom all but fouled a short flag staff there. The tug, knowing it had reached the crucial point, lunged ahead drawing the three inch tow line taut as a catgut. The ship, though barely moving, was still head on to the jetty. Even Captain Tilden, old dog of the sea, held his breath, glancing sharply at the Bar Pilot Wilson, whose attitude was anxious but reassuring. .

Then the outrushing current mysteriously moved the ship over to the port but a few feet; enough, however, for her thin cutter bow to edge past the pile-supported rock-built jetty. The Pilot glanced knowingly, but instantly became serious, when the ship stood still. The tug struggled and the big rope hawser got so tight that it shed drops of water its whole length. Finally, as though tired and exhausted from its fierce struggle, the current released its hold on the ship and she plunged forward, past the jetty's end, into the mouth of America's greatest

river. The *Princess Ann,* Captain Tilden, Master and Owner, was not only over the bar, but safe now in inland waters.

The Captain looked his relief at the Pilot, then quickly passed back into the salon. The ship had shifted the sun away from Jim's face; he looked better now, which was further relief for Tilden.

The food for the evening meal was being put on the table. The Captain saw Jim listlessly go to his room and then return.

"Why did you ask about quarantine, Jim—we're all well?"

"I just asked Sturgis; he says every one will eat nails with Pills-and-Sawbones looking on." Then he continued: "Captain, did you know that this paper the Pilot brought aboard is yesterday's issue?"

"What about it?"

"It has a two column front page story on the sugar situation in what they call the southern district. No white sugar at all, apparently, and very little brown. The brown retails at thirty cents." Jim hesitated still looking at the paper; finally he glanced at Tilden, now sitting gloomily with chin cupped in palm.

"Well, Jim—how are we interested?"

"You are interested if you want to be fair. You can see now that five cents per pound is not excessive to bring three cent sugar to a thirty cent retail

market, where it's so scarce that they send a tug to hurry us up to relieve the famine!"

"Um—yes—" the Captain was still dubious.

"They traced you, this story says, from Callao through the canal. You were reported passing the Dry Tortugas Station, and also, that a tug—the one that has hold of us now—has been waiting two days for us."

"I don't quite see yet—" Captain Tilden stopped, wondering at Jim's aloof manner, but still more at the fact that now he was using "your" and "you" so repeatedly, whereas before it had always been "we" and "our."

"No—you have not had time to think, but you should. I have been thinking ever since we were diverted to New Orleans. This front page publicity that you can't buy with money, is important. You've got a ship to sell, as Fortesque advised. I believe it is just as important to me—"

Princess Ann, awakened by their voices, interrupted him.

"Eh, Jim; you need sleep and rest. Every one is well. There's been no death on board—we're going to have no funeral."

"Yes, Captain, I know that," the young Mate replied, bringing the child alongside, "but that must not keep me from anticipating what's going to happen to me. To apply the rule of three—I have two

known quantities from which I must calculate the third—the unknown. The unknown quantity is—What is Bates trying to do?"

"Eh—Bates?—Bates?—damn him!—but what can he do—why he—"

"Captain, why try to throw dust in my eyes? Bates is active or Mr. Fortesque would not have asked for more information. The Gulf is Bates' native ground. He hates us, bears malice, and will surely seek revenge. His mind is small, active, and certainly cunning."

Neither man ate much. The big chested Captain sat upright looking sorrowfully at the boy who had made for himself such a place in the Captain's heart. He took his food slowly, mechanically, with no zest.

"Jim," he began, glancing up sharply, "Bates should consider himself fortunate if he is not thrown into jail and tried for his crimes!"

"Captain Tilden, we know, the crew knows, and the insurance people know what Bates has done, but can we prove it?—Knowing something, and convincing a jury of it, are two different things."

"Jim, I still ask—what do you think he can do?—The Captain was gazing out of the windows westward where the alluvial deposits of the great river had finally made a bank, which had become firm enough to support the weight of grazing cattle.

The ship seemed to be moving across a meadow with a few scattering stunted trees along their way.

Jim, more composed, though little interested in his food, looked over the child's carriage out of the salon window to the east, where tide creeks worked torturously through the marsh grass. Nothing intercepted his vision except the now cloudless, pulsating, stupendous semi-globular cap fitted upon the earth by the eye and called "horizon." His glance had grown soft when it returned to the Captain, and his tone was less distant when he replied:

"Bates can come very close to making a case against me. I can't get away from the fact that I assaulted him with a deadly weapon, and as a fact, I did strike to kill him. Then when the poor miserable devil came to Valparaiso to look after his legitimate interests, I do the needful thing to throw him into prison."

"Prison?—what for—who for?"

"Who for?—what for? You may have forgotten the details but I'll bring them back," calmly said the Mate. "I did it for Mr. Fortesque; what for, is not all clear to me now. One thing I do know—it has brought me back to New Orleans—a place I had hoped to avoid, a place I adopted, but which never adopted me. But I'm back here and must fight it out. It must be so intended."

"Jim, I suppose you refer to—"

"That I am a fugitive even if Bates does nothing."

"What of that, Jim?—the city of New Orleans will be glad to know that you are well now; that will end it. Anyhow, you are not friendless nor moneyless now. Fortesque's inquiry about Bates does mean something."

"Captain Tilden, in the one talk about myself, I intended to make it clear—quite to the point of warning you—that I made reservations. Even with this notice you may think I practiced unwarranted deception. If so, I must bear that along with the rest. I gave myself to the sea—the wonderful, the marvelous, occupying two-thirds of the earth—the sea that could take me and lodge me anywhere, a million places other than New Orleans;—that I have learned to love so much that I could live on it or die in it, content. But the sea may know what is best—it has brought me back, better, stronger, but nevertheless—to battle."

The Captain, during this speech, did not look at the young Mate, but out of the window at the scattering cypress trees that lined the levee just there with their gnarled, irregular shapes festooned heavily with a rootless, partly parasitic and partly influvia supported moss. Then he interrupted:

"Jim, I don't care what you have done—I don't

care what you have been; it is only what you are now that counts with me."

Jim, with an audible intake of breath, replied:

"The fact still remains that you, all of us, hesitate long before we swallow a shock to our conception of conventions."

"Jim, my boy, your speech is lost time and effort. Such talk is morbid. Both of us must be decently tolerant. Don't we meet on a common ground?—Isn't the child enough—"

"Yes, Captain, the child is enough."

"Captain Tilden," called the Pilot Wilson into the salon, "we can make the head of the pass and the Quarantine Station about thirty minutes before sundown. If you have everything ready, they can come aboard and 'pass' you right now, going half speed."

A signal went to the masthead for a Quarantine Officer. The tug sent it several miles ahead of them by three long blasts. When abreast the station, the doctors came aboard and satisfied themselves that the *Princess Ann* was in the best of health, and released her for up river entry into the United States without a full halt.

Jim and the Captain did not resume their conversation, though each of them had, at a later time, reason to recall its smallest detail—not only every

word that was uttered, but its every inflection and intonation.

Early the next morning they were docked in New Orleans. It meant thousands to the then owners of the sugar, to have it for instant distribution. Captain Tilden went to the Customs House to make entry the moment it opened.

Details delayed him, and it was after nine before he got his order to begin discharging.

After seeing the hatches lifted, he was through. Longshoremen moved the sugar and as it paid more than a cent per pound duty, the United States tally men did the rest.

Tilden left Sturgis in charge and went into the cabin, to find that Jim, together with the child and their principal belongings, was gone.

CHAPTER XXIII

Captain Tilden afterwards confessed that as soon as he knew of a certainty that his Mate had left the ship in his absence and that the child had gone too, he went into the cabin and funked. Arms on the desk for a head rest, he miserably gave way to the abandonment of self pity.

The considerable bundle of mail given him at the Customs House he threw down on the desk unopened. He complained bitterly that his lot on this earth was exceptionally hard—in fact the hardest of all mankind.

The first separate and detached idea that came to him after this violent outburst was about the money. He violently censured Jim as one who loved money for its own sake. He recalled telling him it would turn to ashes in their hands. He would go to New York and give back the cursed stuff to the sea!

With this resolution came a shock, a concussion within, like the violent clanging of a dray load of tempered steel falling a great distance. Time passed; he came into a different, better light. It was as if some one duly authorized had with righteous inordinate power kicked him from behind and

bid him stand up and be a man instead of a puling infant. As a clarion call in the dead of night, it came to him that with health and strength, he must in this world perform a man's work. Talents given him must be accounted for.

Sturgis, rapping, brought the great chest vertical, and the now bloodshot eyes turned towards the door as he bade him enter.

"Captain, the revenue clerks are tallying everything; some more of the men want to go ashore."

"All right, Sturgis; all you can spare can go."

"And some money too?"

"Yes, send them in; I'll fix them up."

His mouth shut decisively and with grinding teeth he crucified the last cowardly thrust of self-pity. Turning to the strong box brought another threatening pang—fear—ogre-eyed fear direct from the nether regions. This was something Jim attended to; on the very top was a pay sheet. The men had signed, receipting for money they drew before going ashore. On the bottom line was his own scarcely dry signature "James Conroy," opposite which was the sum he had paid himself.

When the men had gone, the smile forced for them left the Captain's face and it became as India rubber cast in somber mold. His attempt to joke with them was like beating on an ash heap tin pan instead of a good snare drum.

"This does beat Hell!" he thought; "and it's all based on Jim's going away with the child while I was away. I wonder if this is really a warning—intuitive advance information of impending evil?—or has some devil for the time being, broken down my guard and with satanic glee distorted my sense of proportion?—or is it indigestion?"

He took up the unopened mail. The first letter was a bulky one from Captain Blount; he would read that when he had plenty of time. The next, on insurance stationery, was from Fortesque. He glanced towards Jim's room. Had he heard the slightest sound as coming from Princess Ann, he would have covered the distance with a single bound.

With phonetic brevity, Fortesque told him he knew of his changed destination. He was sending a man to buy the ship.

"Watch Bates!" he wrote; "he is potential trouble, actively resentful and insanely lacking in perception of his own enormities. Immediately you arrive and get this, call me at the Monteleone Hotel."

Nothing else could be as important. Hurrying to a telephone, Tilden thought bitterly of Bates as the author of his present trouble.

"Mr. Fortesque went out," the clerk told him. "He left a message for you that he would come aboard your vessel just as soon as he disposes of

the matter requiring his immediate attention," and the clerk hung up the receiver.

When he left the telephone, instead of going directly back to the ship, he walked towards the Old French Market that paralleled the docks for a distance. Food, oceans of food, the most tempting varieties, was exposed, as it had been for two centuries. Just then Tilden felt that he never would require or relish food again. Most of his thoughts were occupied in blaming Jim for leaving in his absence, which of course, had made it necessary for him to take the Princess with him.—Well, of course he would not stay long, or he would have left some word, even though he had taken both their things and some of his back pay. Withal, he could not resist the contrary impression.

"Ass—fool—you will hear from them soon," he kept on reiterating to himself, turning back in the direction of the ship, resisting violently the reception of sinister telepathic messages, or ominous undownable premonitions that were soon to be confirmed by the most despicable person he knew. Only then it was that he was able to fully understand what Jim had said the night before when entering the river.

The *Princess Ann* was being discharged on a covered dock, so huge that driveways and dray admitting alleys had to be arranged amid the acres

of incoming and outgoing merchandise. Going down one of them towards the ship, Captain Tilden saw him and halted as if he encountered a nauseating blast. He, Bates, was lounging sailor-like on a bale of sisal where he commanded a full broadside view of the *Princess Ann.*

Yes, it was Bates, the Bates of Jim's hateful visions; of Fortesque's important communication; Bates, the adder whose fangs he had warded off but had not destroyed; the Bates who feared to come nearer the ship fearing that Sturgis might do him physical harm or consign him permanently to the yellowish water.

The stevedore-propelled two-wheeled trucks each bearing a three hundred pound bag of choice Peruvian sugar, came from the ship endlessly. As though fascinated by them, Bates watched.

The rumble, jolt and clang of the stream of gasoline and mule-propelled vehicles and the sonorous shouts of their black drivers vied with the loose, metallic, unmechanical rattle of the hand-driven trucks over the worn flooring of the dock. This raging bedlam prevented Bates from receiving any warning; he was so absorbed in the movement about the ship that he was unaware of the Captain's piercing eyes and itching palms.

From the ever-mysterious source of unworthy desires, there came to the Captain an impulse to ap-

proach the latter, unseen, to grasp in his powerful hands that scrawny throat, and to batter his body on the dusty floor between the rows of goods. Captain Tilden afterwards admitted candidly that he did not know whether it was fear of the halter or of offending God that stayed his hand. He had to summon the last iota of strength to relax muscle and tendon of arms that had turned to steel. He was first relieved, then weakened, when murder left his heart. The great bosom heaved laboriously when his thoughts left the shadows; his heart felt strained and his stomach sick. Then he suddenly began to reason.

How far was he—or the immortal, the divine part of Bates—responsible? How much had he inherited of the handicap to moral decency and spiritual development that was plainly his? What jot or spark had been withheld or added to make a Bates whose face was leaden with soul atrophy? Surely Bates himself, though he had the most distorted taste, were any choice allowed him, would not have chosen the small, black, narrow-spaced eyes that looked down the long, unlovely, melancholy nose; nor the S-shaped jaw that ended in front with a brutal bulk between the lip and lower point; nor the talon-like fingers now pulling nervously at a bale of sisal; nor the thin lips, drawn and bloodless.

Would the finite mind ever conceive an intelligible answer to such questions?

Captain Tilden was so thoroughly human, so much a coward then, that he did not proceed on the most direct way to the ship. It may have been because he wanted to meet Bates on his own ground where he could see him better—away from the noisy wharf and nerve-racking environment where proper perspective was impossible; or it may have been that he wanted time to get a better hold on himself. Again the Captain may have avoided him just as he would have a pole cat; or it may have been that the finer soul felt spiritual nausea at the thought of the contact.

CHAPTER XXIV

He was scarcely aboard, and seated at his desk when Sturgis came. Even the mild blue eye glittered while the black one scintillated murderously.

"That rat—that weasel—the old Mate Bates has been hanging around—wanted to see the Mate—now he wants you. Shall I let him come aboard and then on over the side? If it's the same to you, I'd say 'over'—he's not fit to live!"

Captain Tilden glanced from beneath his brows sharply. Sturgis was savagely in earnest.

"No—no!" he cautioned. "Nothing like that, Sturgis. Let him come; nothing—nothing must happen to him now—here!"

"Captain, if any of the crew see him I wouldn't give a drink of moonshine for his life. He'd better stay away."

"Sturgis, see to it yourself that he comes and goes without harm—mind now, not the slightest harm!"

When Bates came in, Captain Tilden greeted him much as a Judge who expected a violent harangue from the prisoner whom he had just asked "Why sentence should not be pronounced?" He pointed silently to a chair.

Bates did not remove his coarse, weather-worn, stiff-brimmed straw hat.

"Tilden," he began beamingly, uncovering yellow teeth, "I got nuthin' against you now. You fought me and you fought me fair; you licked me fair. The rest of 'em—well, I better explain a little. When I went to sea I was a cracker—and I'm a cracker yet about gettin' my man—you know a cracker likes to get his man—" Then as though his mental processes were suddenly interrupted: "You see I hadn't been a sailor long before I got it. Then, of course, they shet me up and I know as well as any one I am—I never will be exactly right—no one is who's had it."

Here the Captain's forehead wrinkled.

"Bates, I don't quite understand—what do you want anyhow?"

"I know you don't—I'll get it all out if you'll give me time. You see it's hard to talk to you—it's always been—you are the best vessel master and sailor, and yet the biggest two kinds of a fool I ever seen. Wait a minute, now; don't get mad. If you hadn't put up a square fight agin me, I wouldn't tell you anything—I'd let you all go to Hell!"

Captain Tilden leaned his head against his hand, closed into a solid fist. Determinedly, with definite purpose, he summoned all his supporting philosophy.

Bates went on:

"You know when you come to the *Durland,* we locked horns and you threw me out—out of my own ship—you know that now— because you was a fool. When I wanted to get rid of the other captains—four or five of 'em—I just showed 'em the marks, the old spots, and they dusted—they went like they'd seen a ghost."

"Bates, I'll admit—but tell me what is this mysterious 'it' that you refer to. Why don't you talk plainly—we'll make better headway."

"That's why I say you're a fool. A man who's gone to sea as long as you and don't know—that Cook Jim knew, and that's—but wait—I'm goin' to be plain because, say, because you made me money. As I say, I hadn't been a sailor long before I got it—leprosy, now you understand? They grabbed me and sent me to the Colony—but I fooled 'em. After four years they said I was cured, at least could not give it to anybody; but I still had the marks, an' I always will have. I went to Mobile and Simmons got all the money I had for a quarter in the *Durland*—it wasn't much; but she wasn't worth much; then. As soon as Simmons found out I was a lep, he wanted to get rid of me as bad as I wanted to get rid of him and git back my money. He'd hire captains and I'd scare 'em off. I wanted to make him so sick, he'd give me back my money.—

"Well, when you come along, you threw me out

of my own ship and made it pay—so we finally got good money. Then that insurance man and the cook, Jim, and you drove me off the sea and now I got a good 'States' job around the lep colony. You see I've hed it and can't git it again."

"Bates, I had nothing to do with your being cashiered. I knew nothing about it until afterwards, but if through it, you got a good job, of course it was best. How can I help you?" Captain Tilden asked sadly.

"Captain, mebbe you can't help me at all—mebbe I'm not the one that needs help now," he continued, with the subtle cunning of certain mental unbalance. "You understand why I had my own quarters forward. One Captain had me about over the side because when I was quartered in the cabin with him, I threw a scare into him by admitting I was a lep. After that I stayed forward. Your cook now got on to me so quick, it made me mad. The fight started because I wasn't ready yit for you or the crew to know I was an old lep."

Tilden, realizing, was dazed. His mind and body were waterlogged.

"Jim told me nothing unless it had to do with the ship," he interjected.

"No, mebbe not, because you might ask how he knew so much about leps. He told you a lot, but the biggest lot he didn't tell. He didn't tell you the

safety razor he was using had a tin blade. I said it to him quick, and then I wasn't long in finding out that Jim, the cook—now your First Mate—was a woman!"

"A woman!" Captain Tilden's voice was sharp. "Bates, you are going too far—you're ridiculous. I won't listen longer—"

Bates sprang to his feet, gave his thigh a resounding smack, and glowered at the Captain, agitated for a moment beyond control. He turned to the window. Something he saw in Algiers across the river held him for a moment, when wheeling to face the Captain with tolerant, lofty sarcasm, he exclaimed excitedly:

"I knew it—I knew it! I couldn't believe it at first—another such man was never born. As a wind-jambing ship Master, you beat the world, but after that you're only a kid—no, not a kid—a jackass that don't know no better'n work for his feed—just a damned fool! Ha! First I thought it was a case of a woman—his kid—their kid—and the skipper. She had you hipped from the start. She didn't fool me long, though. No man on earth could handle grub and dishes, or take care of a kid like that; she was dead used to it. Then that dead stall of scraping her face every few days with a tin blade right out on deck for every one to see. When she got my hands—I mean caught the spots so quick—it

made me crazy; made me know she knew all about leps. But that damned insurance man—what's his name—and his kid fooled you both, and me too till I came ashore. He's the slickest of all, but I finally got him too."

The blood had left the Captain's face. He sat as one holding his breath. Instead of indignation, there was a dull fixedness in his stare. He knew now what had been depressing him. Violence to Bates would change or mend nothing. He recognized him only as a medium through which this thrust of fortune had come. He thought of the Mate as a boy—Jim had grown upon him until he loved him. Now this indescribable shock! But Bates did not give him much time to think before proceeding craftily, brutally:

"You see, when they cashiered me off the sea—you know I had to sign that way to get out of prison at Chile—I had to come back here to report; we cured leps have to report ever so often to be sure we're still right, and when I did, they offered me this job. No one else would take it—one State job no politician wants—bringing in new leps and looking after escapes. I got too sharp—that's how I got Fortesque. First off, Jim's stall about leavin' the marine hospital smelt fishy to me, and when the Department give me her picture with some other escapes, I caught the face; sailor clothes didn't fool

me any. Oh, she didn't deny it this morning when they arrested her. She went along as if expecting it. It was in the papers about your sailing with sugar from Callao, and of course I knew she was still with you.—

"That's all there's to it. Your First Mate's right name is "Amelia Rosco."—She came from Florida —her father was a rich sponge fisher—sent her to school and all. Here in New Orleans she worked for the newspapers; then she married a lep. He died and their child died—leps. Then when they was holding her to get over a fever, to see if she had it, she escaped and came aboard the *Durland* as cook."

Captain Tilden drew a deep breath; it seemed as if his great chest would never fill. His left hand grasped the corner of the desk. If his right fell on the other corner, even the big desk might be hurled at the figure before him. Bates realized, though vaguely, the intense shock—the suffering of the man, and felt relieved when he saw his hands come together. When he looked into his eyes, Bates felt the havoc he had wrought.

Captain Tilden inhaled deeply, exhaled audibly, but it was not a sigh. It was only vitalizing for tremendous effort. His hands were still clinched.

It seemed to him that Jim, the first officer of the ship *Princess Ann*—the one who had won his paren-

tal affection in form more substantial than flesh—stalked to his side and plucked his sleeve, exactly as he had when urging him to buy the vessel, bidding him arise with the might of outraged truth. Then it was that the clouds were swept away and the clear light of Heaven shone through the palpitating blue. He knew that in that moment that the premonitions, more terrible for being intangible, either telepathic, or sent from Heaven or Hell—had concerned his Jim, who though now invisible, appealingly touched and powerfully nerved his brain, body and arm. Worse than useless it is to bid a big man to pay deceit, craftiness, or cunning in kind —At that they always fail miserably.

Less spectacular and more terrible weapons, sagacity and astuteness, based on the external verity of right, are his.

Like a living spirit from Heaven, Jim, stronger by far than if he had been there in person, urged him to think.

He remembered Jim's "important reservations." He did not care now any more than he had then. He remembered too at this moment certain flashes he had had of Jim, moments of wonder, how he had grown to love his Mate.

"Bates, sit down!" came as an order to clear decks for action. Bates not only immediately sat, but cowered forward with both hands grasping his chair

seat in front, fully aware that Captain Tilden had recovered from the shock and tossed away fear and timidity. He turned aface Bates with his right arm on the desk. It seemed a necessity for his long, thick body to be erect, so that he could turn at balance in any direction which in turn enabled his brain to properly function. "Red Oak" Tilden was again in action.

"Bates, can you recall when we first met?"

"Yes—Mobile."

"It was about daylight when I came aboard the *Durland*. Bates, as soon as you told me you were the Mate, I decided at that moment that I would not trust you with a shoestring, and I've not changed. You had been robbing your partner, Simmons. He is straight. Now you may ease any remnant of conscience you may have by attributing your thieving and other more serious criminal inclinations to an after-effect of disease. Personally, however, Bates, I believe in the whipping post for some men and the ducking stool for some women. I can't think of anything so likely to cure you of your moral lapses as the cat-o'-nine-tails spread about ten times over your bare back. Don't think this is gratis. I'm coming to that soon.—

"No, Bates, get fresh, oral, visual and mental evidence that I would not accept, unsupported, anything you might say under oath, or even when you

knew you were dying!" Bates shriveled visibly. Tilden went on: "So far, your plans, springing from whatever polluted fountain they may, unfailingly involve your safety or profit, or both. Preventing the crimes you attempted on board the *Durland,* and finally making you dollars, is all you have against Jim, whom you talk of as 'your man' you are going to 'get.' What tangible evidence have you that your whole story is not a created lie—a hellish fabrication?"

Chagrined, Bates' thin hard lips stretched over yellow teeth. Palsied with fear, Bates did not reply.

"If this story is an infernal lie, with nothing to back it up, I'll kill you—right on this spot!"

CHAPTER XXV

A HURRICANE is no less destructive because of storm signals; a soft tropical zephyr slowly becomes a breeze—a wind—a piping gale. Though the sun often rises a second time before the habitation and life-destroying currents come, they are none the less devastating.

Captain Tilden required life's accumulated strength to resist the hurricane that swept across his soul. He felt he was being "put through" as he had put ships through to develop their strength as well as their weaknesses, that they might be repaired and made whole.

Bates, as though stung, turned and fled at his last words. One thought animated him—to obtain proof wanted and return with it to satisfy this man possessed by a power that could and would destroy him.

With Bates' last hated step, Tilden's every muscle was palsied; even his eyes stared narrowly as in death. Silence was complete except for the rumbling of hand trucks bearing sugar out of the ship. He cursed the sugar; he cursed the gold as the threshold to this Hell he had entered.

Tilden recalled that Jim with brutal frankness had many times warned him of "important reservations."

Bates' story discounted ninety-five per cent., still pointed to something, but no!—by Heavens! he would not believe a jot of the whole concoction springing from such a rotten source. Jim, a leper woman, with the child Princess Ann—the tiny life that tugged at his heart, dragged to a festering lepers' camp!

Then he recalled how when it was definitely known that their port was changed to New Orleans, Jim had begun to droop. All he said—all he did not say—when they entered the river, and were directly aface New Orleans, passed vividly through Tilden's mind. It fitted in with Bates' story!

"No—no—I'll not believe it though legions troop by each chanting 'Yea!'— The boy, with the child, Princess Ann, will soon return from nothing more than a shopping tour ashore!"—aye—there was a step—his eyes strained; he went hurriedly to the door of the cabin. At the deck entrance to the salon, stood a stranger.

"Captain Tilden?—my name is Schoonmaker. I have been told this ship's for sale."

The storm still raging within him, Tilden bade him enter. Only after the name Fortesque was mentioned, did he point to a chair.

"Yes—we will sell the ship—" his voice was expressionless.

"I know the ship—how you have repaired her, and all, and I'll give you one hundred a ton register if I can get immediate delivery." The would-be purchaser's voice was eager.

To Tilden's credit it can be said that he didn't hear the price—he wasn't interested. He replied:

"The moment the last bag of sugar goes, you can come for her; bring either currency or gold; the ship will be yours—but on one condition only."

"What's that?" snapped out the man of business.

"That you change her name."

"That's easy—when will she be ready?"

"To-morrow."

Schoonmaker threw down some bills to bind the sale and was gone. Though he had been there all told less than one hundred seconds, to Tilden it seemed a tiresome hour.

Sideways, with his back to the door, he settled back into his chair—collapsed, inert—so near coma that he did not hear the other step advance—positive, strong, each one emphasized and punctuated by the fall of a heavy cane.

A resounding slap on his broad shoulders was Fortesque's greeting. Captain Tilden straightened so suddenly that his body catapulted forward, send-

ing the chair spinning backward. He reached for the underwriter's hand. He felt a surge of hope. Instinctively he knew that Fortesque bore news and felt—knew—it was good. Like a foul weather grip upon the steering wheel, he grasped his hand and scanned the rough hewn face.

"Ah—er—Captain Tilden, it's no use to ask—I can see you are just now pretty hard put. But what's this—what's this—er—a bit careless, I should say; thousand dollar bills lying loose around?"

"Yes, some one was just here; I have sold the ship; but just before he came, a human monster crawled in, covering everything with slime. I'm about funked; I'm about done for."

"Ah—Bates, you mean?"

"Yes." Tilden bit the word.

"Ah—er—I was thinking as much—"

"Eh, then, tell me—tell me—is it so?"

"Er—now, Captain Tilden, you must not think my news is all bad—"

"Then it is so?" persisted Tilden savagely.

"Ah—er—Captain Tilden, I presume you refer to your Mate?—Ah—she—" his words came maddeningly slow.

"Yes!—she, he or it—sex means nothing—has my Mate, with the child, been taken away as a leper?" His voice was losing its control.

"Ah—er—Captain Tilden, sit down—and let me

sit. Ah—there, that's more comfortable. You see this man Bates, while he has that subtle cunning—a sort of disease remainder—is also a bit of an ass. He tried to blackmail me into letting him back on the sea, and only succeeded in letting me know his plans. It was not very difficult then to defeat his ultimate aim against your cook—and the little one." He was silent for a moment, then continued: "Jim and the little one stay right here in the City—only until a blood test is completed. That may be at any moment. We will know definitely soon—"

"What if the blood shows leprous inoculation?"

"Ah, Captain, I don't believe it will."

"I say, if it does!" Tilden demanded.

"Oh—ah—Captain—if it does, it is no occasion to feel hopeless. First of all, the popular, even world-wise misconception of the malady dates back to Bible times, and we have much that's worse thought little of because of greater familiarity. When I learned what this man Bates was going to do, I got hold of everything available on the subject. Now, candidly, Captain Tilden, the left-over or remainder of any of the venereal diseases is worse—Scrofula for example that has taken about all your red men and is now fast decimating the black population of North America!—

"More hopeful than this, my dear Tilden," Fortesque continued, "is the assurance that the cure of

leprosy, though a little slow, is no less certain. If we find either or both Jim and the—the Little One—inoculated, we need not despair; they can be cured."

As Tilden continued silent, Fortesque pulled up to the end of the Captain's flat desk and removed his hat, at once again taking up the conversation. Tilden was not saying anything. Suddenly he realized that his only care in the world was that he could feel sure that some day, in some way, his Mate and the child might come back to him.

"I am, with you, vitally interested in this case as you will see, but before I start to tell you more, let's light up. Have a cigar—one is less inclined to quarrel while smoking."

Something in the tobacco or the small island of upstanding hair above the underwriter's forehead helped Tilden to get a hold on himself. He leaned back, his cigar clenched between his grinders.

"Ah—I suppose this graduate of the Lepers' Colony has said that the Little One is my child?" Fortesque's voice was inquiring.

Tilden's eyes glittered. He crunched his cigar, then nodded.

"I violently dislike discussing my private affairs; how my domestic matters got me into the notion of abducting, as it were, my own child, does not really matter to you, beyond knowing that I did so. How the child was put aboard your vessel and for what

purpose, are details that are not really essential to the issue at this point. But—er—it may, however, be as well to state that it was considered a certainty that you would land her at Key West. That was before we really knew Captain Tilden.—

"Ah—er—this enlightens you sufficiently to indicate how vital it is to me to know that Jim's blood runs pure—the possibility of infection, you know—"

He was interrupted by Sturgis who said that Bates wanted to see the Captain.

"I told him to come back, or I'd—"

"My dear Tilden—ah—er—I say, when you look at Bates one way you can but pity—even sympathize with him—"

Tilden arose hastily and met Bates at the door.

"Captain Tilden, I got something for Mr. Fortesque—is he here?"

"Yes, he's here—what is it?"

Bates produced a sealed, official envelope which the Captain passed to Fortesque.

"Now, Captain, this answers all your questions, but—but of course if you was in my place—" Bates' voice was hesitant.

"Bates?"

"Yes—yes—they're both all right and waiting for you to come out and get 'em," Bates replied as he backed away.

"Ah—er—Captain—read this: 'This is to cer-

tify—' oh damnation!—clean—free from all taint is what it means!"

They were both silent for a space; then Tilden's words came slowly:

"I suppose you will take Princess Ann from us—from me?"

"Ah, Captain, I was coming to that. Er—for reasons of my own, I think best—that is—I've decided to leave her with you—if you're willing to make yourselves her legal parents."

Tilden was about to spring from his chair, but instead exclaimed:

"Parents!"

"Ah—er—now I'll give you more good news—ah—the steamer—the big ship *Princess Ann* is in commission and waiting for a Master—that is, for you. Ah—er—she's a wonder, nearly twenty thousand tons; and now I say, Captain Tilden, I don't want to be considered presumptive, but you see I've quite arranged to secure a license for your 'First Mate'—er—Jim—to sail with you in the *Princess Ann*—a—er—a license, Captain Tilden."

"Red Oak" was silent; he could hardly grasp the magnitude of the happiness that had come to him. The Mate with him—always. The little Princess Ann, theirs, a perpetual reminder of the sea's rejuvenating power and that the One on High works in devious ways his miracles to perform.

Suddenly he thought of Fortesque—so upright—so square. A man through and through—driven by reasons of his own to give up his own child.

He looked at the insurance man. His eyes filled with tears. He gripped Fortesque's hand hard.

Suddenly Fortesque spoke again:

"It's all right, old man.—We know each other. We both have work to do—let us do it!"

THE END

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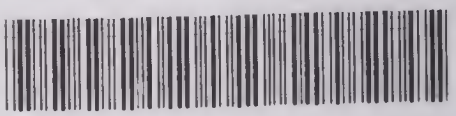

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